

Sri Lanka
maid wins
\$128,000
for 'slave
treatment'

Bomb blast injures at least 9 in Kosovo

UROSEVAC (AP) — A rare daytime bombing in Kosovo injured at least nine people Saturday outside a government-owned bank as violence persisted in the separatist province despite ongoing peace talks. As many as 20 shops were damaged in the 1 p.m. blast just outside the Jugobanka Bank in Urosevac, 40 kilometers south of the provincial capital Pristina. The bomb was "huge," with an explosive power perhaps equal to that of an anti-tank mine, said Jorgen Grunnet, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. OSCE bomb experts reported damage for 100 metres (yards). The ethnic Albanians' Kosovo Information Center said at least seven of the victims were Kosovo Albanians.

Volume 24 Number 7070

AMMAN SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1999, SHAWWAL 28, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils



Senior Hamas official arrested

GAZA CITY (AP) — Palestinian police on Saturday accused a senior leader of the Islamist group Hamas of aiding a fugitive sought in the death of a police officer. Police said Mahmoud Zahar violated Palestinian law of aiding a fugitive when he performed surgery on a member of the group's military branch, who suffered gun shot wounds during a shoot-out with Palestinian police two weeks ago. Zahar was well aware that the man was sought by police and yet he provided him with medical care and surgery in his private clinic, the police statement said. Zahar, a paediatrician, was summoned for questioning Thursday.

20 killed in South African accident

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Twenty people were killed, including four members of a family, in a head-on collision between two minibuses near South Africa's northern mining town of Rustenburg Saturday, police said. Fourteen of the 18 passengers in one minibus died while six people, including a mother, father and two of their children, were killed in the other minibus. Five people were seriously injured in the smash.

Nigeria clears shantytown after FIFA complaints

LAGOS (AFP) — Local government workers, protected by armed soldiers, have begun clearing out a shantytown of homes and bars in Lagos, turning out hundreds of residents, after complaints from international football authorities, residents and officials said Saturday. Residents of the shantytown area known as Bar Beach, Lagos, told AFP Saturday they had been ordered out and their homes flattened with bulldozers after Nigerian authorities received complaints from FIFA, the international footballing body. Nigeria is to host the youth World Cup in April and is desperate not to do anything that will make FIFA withdraw its hosting rights.

Bomb kills Spaniard in resort

SALOU (AFP) — A 63-year-old Spaniard was killed Saturday when a bomb buried in the sand exploded at Salou, on Spain's northeastern coast, police said. Investigators were reluctant to link the powerful blast to Basque separatists, officials said, noting that the ETA, which mounted attacks on seaside resorts in the past, has observed a truce since September. Police ruled out the possibility that the bomb was an old device, saying the beach was checked frequently.

German tourist killed in cyclone in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — A German tourist was killed and another injured when a billboard crashed on to the hood of their car during a cyclone in the southern Turkish province of Antalya, the Anadolu news agency reported Saturday. The victim in Friday's incident was identified as 70-year-old Helmut Werner. Her injured friend, 76-year-old Montfort Schmitt, was reported to be in critical condition. The tourists were travelling from Antalya airport to the province's Belek town in the car of a Turkish friend at the time of the incident, Anadolu said.

King Abdullah meets with German FM EU reiterates commitment to Jordan

By Francesca Ciriaci
with agencies

AMMAN — The European Union on Saturday reiterated its commitment to stand by Jordan politically and financially in recognition of its pivotal role in the Middle East peace process and in the region as a whole.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, whose country currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the EU, said after talks here yesterday with His Majesty King Abdullah that "both Germany and the EU understand that Jordan is in a very difficult situation, because it is in between the Palestinians and Israel, on one side, and Iraq on the other."

"We told King Abdullah that we will continue our financial and economic help," Fischer told a press conference.

Germany last year decided to cancel all of Jordan's debt under a JD21.3 million debt-swap.

Announcing the decision during a visit here last November, German State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ludger Volmar said then that Jordan's DM50 million debt (was to be) swapped into development projects because "the peace dividends we all had hoped for have not materialised."

Israel froze the implementation of last October's Wye River Memorandum, which King Hussein worked hard to mediate, rising from his sick-bed during chemotherapy treatment to give peace yet another chance.

"We agreed with King Abdullah on the full implementation of the Wye agreement before May 4 (the deadline of the Oslo interim peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinians)," Fischer said yesterday.

He also said Jordan and Europe shared the same convictions that the Middle East must be freed from weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq must fully comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"But we also agree that the suffering of the Iraqi people must be alleviated," he added.

Fischer stressed the need for the international community to continue discussing various proposals presented by the U.S., France, and the Arab League on a partial lifting of the nine-year-old sanctions on Baghdad.

On behalf of both Germany and the EU, the envoy also expressed "deep regret over the death of King Hussein, a very important man for the peace process."

"We must find ways to solve the problems which Jordan obviously has in the economic sector because we are very interested in stability here in Jordan," Fischer told reporters before heading to Cairo for the seventh leg of a Middle East tour.

During his brief visit to Jordan, Fischer also held talks with Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khateib, who said "discussions concentrated on the peace process and the need for alleviating the plight of the Iraqi people."



His Majesty King Abdullah meets Saturday with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer at Raghadan Palace (AP photo)

"We expressed Jordan's appreciation for Germany's and Europe's support, and also expressed our hopes that this support will be enhanced," Khateib said at the press conference.

Fischer — accompanied by EU Middle East envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos and European Commission Vice President Manuel Marin — has already visited Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria and Yemen.

Earlier Saturday, he held talks with Syrian President Hafez Assad and stressed the need for progress in the Middle East peace process.

"The alternative to the peace process in the Middle East is very dangerous — it's war," Fischer was quoted as saying by Agence France Presse.

"We know the problems [in the peace process] but we have the ability to talk to the protagonists and work them out step by step," he said.

"The EU must play its role

and do all it can, notably on the economic side, to help establish confidence between the protagonists so that they can find an acceptable solution themselves," he added.

Assad spokesman Jibril Kourieh was quoted as saying that members of Fischer's delegation as well as Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara'a sat in on the talks with Assad, which focused on the peace process as well as relations between Syria and Germany, and Damascus and the European Union.

King receives condolences from Iranian president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Saturday received a cable from Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who congratulated the King upon assuming his constitutional duties.

In his message, Khatami stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral ties and expressed hope that relations would improve to the benefit of the two countries' interests.

The Iranian president pray to God for King Abdullah's health and success as well as happiness and prosperity for the Jordanian people.

Also Saturday, King Abdullah received cables expressing condolences over the passing away of King Hussein from the following countries, organisations and dignitaries:

Saudi Arabian Deputy Chief of the National Guard Prince Bader Ben Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Al Sabah, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, French President Jacques Chirac, Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, Egyptian Shura Council President Mustafa Hilmi, Seif Islam Muammar Qadhafi, son of the Libyan president, the presidents of Sri Lanka, Romania, Indonesia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Iceland, North Korea, Brazil, Austria, Singapore, Cyprus and Switzerland, a former Austrian president, the secretary general of the Arab Interior Ministers Council, Ahmad Al Salem, the prime ministers of Jamaica and Belgium, and Nepal's king.

Jordanian-Palestinian confederation is 'premature' — official

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior Palestinian official Saturday echoed Jordan's view that a confederation between Jordan and Palestine is premature but emphasised that the two sides were maintaining close coordination and cooperation at all levels.

The speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), Ahmad Qureia, who met yesterday with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, said "a confederation is premature, but I cannot imagine a future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship without some formula approved by the people of the two sides."

"The Palestinian National Council has approved the idea of establishing a confederation between two independent states," Qureia was quoted as saying by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He said he was hopeful Palestinian-Israeli negotiations would succeed and would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, after which Jordan and Palestine could reach an agreement in this respect.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khateib Friday reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including the right to establish an independent state on Palestinian national soil. He said that once this state is established, "all options will be open for a future relationship between Jordan and

Palestine."

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat surprised politicians with an announcement Friday that he was interested in forging a confederation between Jordan and a future Palestinian state.

Qureia told journalists after meeting Tarawneh that Arafat's remarks reflect the "excellent" nature of Jordanian-Palestinian relations and the close bonds between the two sides.

He said Arafat made the remarks in recognition of King Hussein's "great efforts" in supporting the Palestinian cause and people.

Qureia, who met with His Majesty King Abdullah to offer condolences in his name and on behalf of the PLC on the passing of King Hussein, said the Palestinian leadership will maintain close cooperation with Jordan, noting that the current situation is very critical and requires intensive meetings and constant coordination.

"The Palestinian National Authority is very keen on pursuing cooperation with His Majesty King Abdullah on all fronts," Qureia said.

In reply to a question about the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following the death of King Hussein, Qureia said: "The dinar is an official currency for the Palestinians and the exchange rate has returned to normal."

Libya announces 'positive results' in Lockerbie case

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya announced Saturday that mediation efforts had led to "positive results" in the Lockerbie affair but cautioned the thorny issue of U.N. sanctions imposed on Tripoli remained unresolved.

The statement came amid reports that Tripoli had agreed that the two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing be jailed in Scotland under U.N. monitoring if convicted, overcoming the latest hurdle in the long process to bring the men to trial.

"Positive results were reached in the Lockerbie matter thanks to the intensive efforts of Saudi Arabia and South Africa," Libya's foreign ministry said in a statement cited by the official news agency JANA.

"All that remains is for coordination with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the other parties involved" to ensure the lifting of sanctions, imposed on Libya in 1992 over its refusal to extradite the two suspects, wanted for the bombing of a Pan Am jet over Scotland that left 270 dead.

Western diplomats in New York told AFP earlier that Libya had retreated from earlier demands and agreed that the men — Abdul Basset Ali Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah — would serve jail terms in Scotland if convicted.

But the diplomats said the agreement, accepted by Washington and London and in the process of being drawn up by Annan's legal team, provides for the suspension of U.N. sanctions.

It was unclear if their suspension, rather than an outright lifting, would satisfy Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's demands.

Britain and the United States have threatened to tighten sanctions unless the men are handed over by Feb. 26 when the U.N. Security Council will review the Libya embargo.

The diplomats said that as a result of Saudi and South

African mediation in the case, made at Annan's request, Britain and the United States have agreed that the U.N. chief could certify Libya was no longer involved with "terrorism."

This certification would enable the U.N. Security Council to lift the sanctions completely after a further 90-day period.

The diplomats stressed, however, that a clear statement should be made by Tripoli concerning the latest understanding.

"We need a clear acceptance of the terms," one diplomat familiar with the process told AFP.

In London a Foreign Office spokesman said earlier that British diplomats in Tripoli were not aware of any decision by the Libyan government on the matter.

He added that London did not expect to be able to comment further until it had been in touch with Annan on Sunday.

Annan on Saturday issued a statement saying he was "greatly encouraged" after being briefed on developments on Friday by Rihab Massoud, deputy chief of mission of the Saudi embassy in Washington.

He said he was "looking forward to the speedy conclusion of this matter" as Western diplomats said the U.N. chief was drafting a letter to Libya that would set out the terms of the agreement.

But the letter, a copy of which was expected to go to the U.N. Security Council, was not expected to be ready before Monday or Tuesday.

Announcement of the breakthrough came earlier Saturday in a statement from South African President Nelson Mandela's office that said a "common understanding" had been reached on all outstanding issues.

Ben Laden 'missing,' Taliban say

KABUL (AFP) — Alleged Saudi Islamist Osama Ben Laden has "gone missing" and his whereabouts are unknown, a spokesman for Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia said Saturday.

"About Sheikh Osama, we just heard today that he has gone missing and we have no idea if he is still in Afghanistan or left the country."

"But we have not forced him out," Taliban spokesman Tayeb Khan said from Kandahar.

Taliban officials said no pressure was put on Ben Laden to leave the country despite repeated efforts by the United States to extradite the Saudi dissident to stand trial for the bombings of two U.S. embassies in east Africa on Aug. 7 which left more than 200 people dead.

Ben Laden was believed to have been living in Kandahar, the Taliban's de facto base in southern Afghanistan, since the U.S. last year launched retaliatory missile strikes against his base in Afghanistan.

The United States said Thursday Taliban moves to isolate Ben Laden within Afghanistan "were not acceptable."

"Our view is that what they have announced falls woefully short of what is required," State



Osama Ben Laden

Department spokesman James Foley told reporters.

The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) Wednesday reported the Taliban had banned Ben Laden from accepting visitors or having outside contact.

All communication equipment including his telephone and radio had been withdrawn, AIP reported.

Speaking Thursday Foley said the Taliban move was not enough for someone "who has killed innocent civilians and... has promised to continue killing innocent civilians."

Foley would not comment on reports the United States had threatened military strikes against the Taliban if they did not expel Ben Laden, but reiterated

comments last week by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright that Washington reserved the right to use force against terrorism.

British press reports have said Ben Laden was also believed to be plotting to attack British targets in Europe.

The Guardian last week said a meeting took place in late December in the Afghan mountains near Kandahar between the exiled Saudi Islamist and Baghdad's ambassador in Turkey, Farouk Hijazi, one of the top Iraqi intelligence men.

The newspaper, which cited U.S. intelligence sources and Iraqi opposition figures, said Ben Laden's response was unknown.

It linked the meeting to a warning this week by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno before the Senate that a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction was a growing concern.

The newspaper also quoted a Middle East specialist at Georgetown University, Mamoun Fandy, as saying Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had promised the Saudis once his radical Islamist movement secured control over all of Afghanistan, Ben Laden would be forced to leave.

Speculation on Tarawneh government's fate starts in earnest

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The capital's elite circles are rife with speculation on the fate of the government of Fayez Tarawneh, with some expecting its resignation within a matter of days and others betting it will carry on for weeks.

Although not written in the law books, many contend that the government should step down in line with a traditional policy following the proclamation of a new King.

"It already happened when King Talal and King Hussein took the reins of the country," said a former minister. "I do not see why it should not happen now."

Although the camp of those expecting Tarawneh's resignation can count on historical precedents to support

their argument, they are still divided as to whether His Majesty King Abdullah will accept Tarawneh's resignation and appoint a new premier to form a

NEWS ANALYSIS

new government in the next few days or ask the 23-member Cabinet to continue for a while to allow for extensive consultations with former prime ministers and politicians to take place.

Some politicians say that to cope with the dramatic changes that Jordan witnessed in the past few weeks, King Abdullah could ask Tarawneh to carry on after a reshuffle which could involve, they say, more than a handful of portfolios.

"Changing the government is not an

urgent matter. It can wait," said former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat.

But, he stressed, a government change will eventually come naturally as part of the "comprehensive review" that King Hussein announced but did have time to finalise, and as part of the "major changes" that King Abdullah has already promised to support the democratisation process and political pluralism, and boost civil society institutions.

When King Talal ascended to the Throne, on Sept. 6, 1951, then-premier Tawfiq Abul Huda resigned two days later, but formed a new government on the same day.

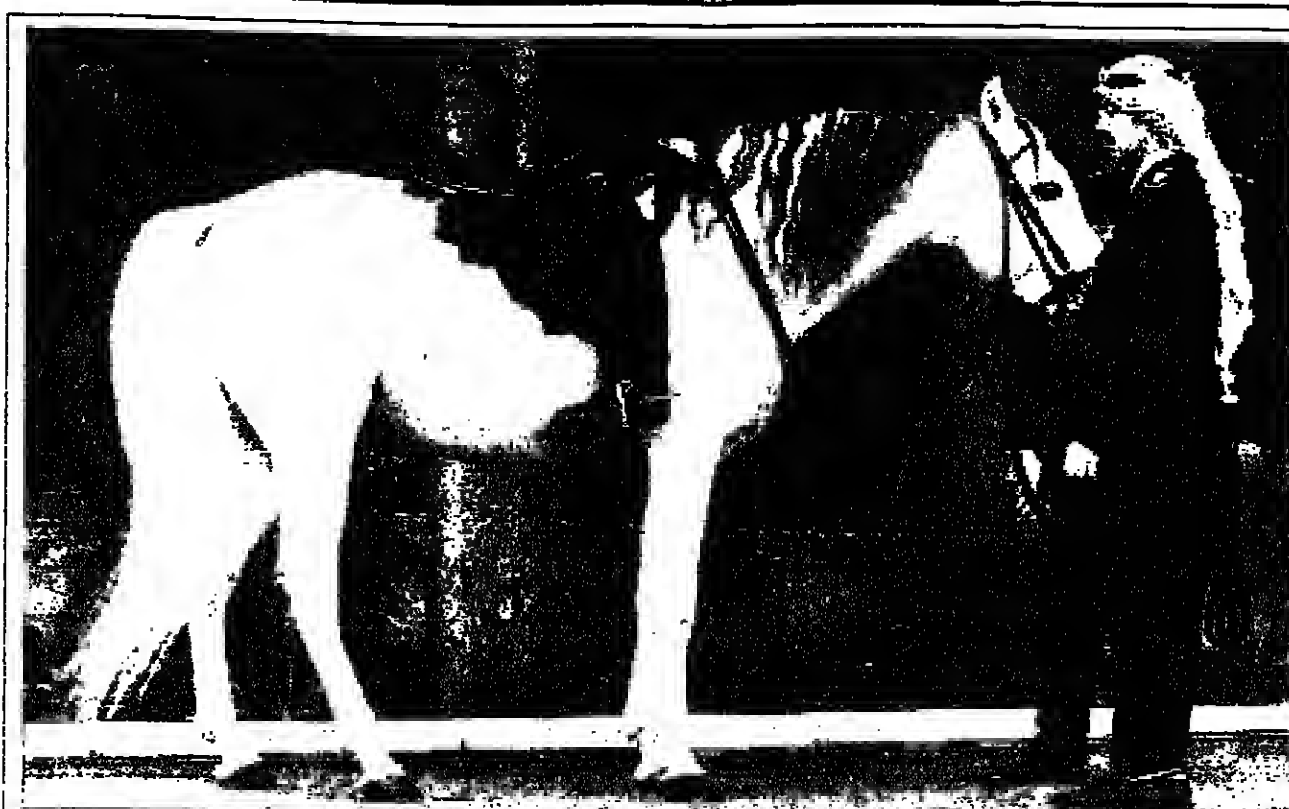
Similarly, when King Hussein ascended to the Throne, on Aug. 11, 1952, Abul Huda handed in his resignation a few weeks later, on Sept. 27,

1952, only to form a new government on Sept. 30.

Experts say a parallel supporting the thesis that Tarawneh should hand in his resignation could also be drawn with the constitutional stipulation that the government is required to receive a new vote of confidence whenever a new Parliament is elected.

Hopes are high among liberals and reformists that King Abdullah's plans for Jordan's new course will include more press freedoms, through amendments to the 1998 Press and Publications Law, and a new elections law to rectify the current imbalances deriving from a one-person, one-vote formula applied to unequal constituencies.

(Continued on page 2)



Amru draws wonder from King Hussein's admirers

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — The Arabian horse, that earliest improved breed of horse, is valued by equestrians in the world over for its speed, stamina, beauty and intelligence.

The Arabian breed was first mentioned in 400 BC and is said to have stemmed from five mares given to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by his followers.

While the world was transfixed by the funeral cortege of His Majesty King Hussein on Monday, a riderless white stallion, which was led into the procession, drew wonder.

Amru, as this stallion is called, was King Hussein's favourite horse.

Foaled in the Royal Hashemite Stables in 1984, Amru comes from the Kehilan Krush, one of the seven Arabian horse breeds of the Ara-

bian peninsula.

He was prepared for the funeral festivities by two of King Hussein's daughters, both equestrians themselves — Their Royal Highnesses Princess Haya and Princess Eman.

With black riding boots placed backwards in the stirrups, a British tradition symbolising the passing away of a leader, the stallion followed the gun carriage upon which King Hussein's coffin

rested all the way to the grave site where the late King was laid to rest last Monday.

In keeping with that same tradition, Amru was not returned to his own stable — the stallion is now kept at the Jafar Stables of HRH Princess Zein Bint Al Hussein.

Nearing the King's final resting place, Amru reared up on his hind legs, as if in a final salute to his master.

Jordanians call at Royal Court

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanians called at the Royal Court Saturday to sign a special register expressing their condolences on the death of King Hussein, who died last Sunday.

Visitors who came to the Royal Court to sign the register pledged allegiance to King Abdullah Ben Hussein and the Hashemite Throne.

The register will be available to the public from 10 a.m. until 12 noon daily from Feb. 13 to March 18.

The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions Saturday issued a statement expressing Jordanian labourers' deep grief on the passing of King Hussein.

"King Hussein has left us a

legacy of great achievements and had supported Jordanian labourers, whom he considered nation's backbone in view of their role in construction and development. He forged legislation on the social security system to ensure labourers' security and played an active role in organising the relationship between employees and employers," said the statement.

The federation said Jordanian labourers pledge to honour the King and his legacy by protecting the country's achievements and vow to double their production efforts to further the country's progress and prosperity.

The federation pledged to support King Abdullah and

Crown Prince Hamzah in their march.

Bishop Samir Qafeti, head of the Episcopal Evangelical Church in Jordan and Palestine, also sent a cable of sympathy to King Abdullah and Prince Hamzah Saturday.

Chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce Haidar Murad sent a cable to Crown Prince Hamzah expressing sympathy over the passing of King Hussein and pledging allegiance to the Hashemite Throne.

"We renew our loyalty to the Throne as we forge ahead behind the Hashemite leadership towards the attainment of further progress and prosperity for Jordan," said Murad.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hamzah on Saturday received a cable from French President Jacques Chirac in which he expressed his condolences on the passing of King Hussein. He said King Hussein was a close friend which he lost and that the King will be always remembered for his endeavours to attain peace.

President Chirac voiced his country's support to Jordan and expressed his congratulations to Prince Hamzah on his appointment as Crown Prince.

Prince Hamzah also received a congratulatory cable from Chinese Deputy President Hu Tao in which he wished him further success.

Demand for dollar remains normal

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Banker and money changers reported on Saturday a normal demand for the dollar and other foreign currencies after business resumed following the week-long period of public mourning.

The dollar lost against the dinar, reaching its average exchange value after a slight rise earlier last week due to public concern about the King's deteriorating health.

The dollar's closing price on the market ranged from 711-712 fils.

"The minute difference between the sell and buy price of the dollar is an indication of the market's stability," said Mufleh Agel, regional manager of the Arab Bank.

However, bankers attribute the demand for the dollar to different reasons. The smooth transition of power from His Majesty King Hussein and His Majesty King Abdullah was a major factor in stabilising

the local market and assuring Jordanians as well as their neighbours of financial stability, bankers said.

"The transfer of power has been very smooth, ensuring political and economic stability in the country," said Akel.

"Another reason is the efficiency of the Central Bank's monetary policy," added Akel.

The Central Bank has reserved around \$100 million in cash in order to meet the market's demands. Jordan's foreign currency reserves stand at \$1.2 billion.

Jordanians were assured last week when promises of foreign aid to Jordan started raining down from the international community.

American President Bill Clinton said he would request that Congress urgently grant Jordan \$300 million to Jordan. The United Arab Emirates also said it would deposit a yet-unannounced amount of money in the CBJ to bolster confidence in the dinar.

According to bankers, the

deposit will range from \$250-\$400 million for at least five years.

The International Monetary Fund added its voice to the chorus of concern and stability of extending new credits to Jordan, or giving the green light to creditor countries to reschedule Jordan's debts. The credit is expected to be around \$250 million, according to one banker.

Other countries also have promised to send aid, but have not specified the amount or the manner in which the aid will be extended.

Iraq, Jordan's primary bilateral trading partner, also has assured Jordan that it will continue exporting oil to the Kingdom as usual.

Earlier this month, money changers and bankers feared a run on the dollar after unpromising news about King Hussein's health. Some money changers reported that demand was slightly up, while bankers said that they had not noticed any unusual

purchasing activity.

Last summer, when the King left the country for the United States for treatment of a non-Hodgkins lymphoma, Jordan witnessed a capital flight of approximately \$400 million in a matter of days.

"People last summer were unsure about the future of the country after the King's sudden departure, which explains the panic buying," said an official from the Housing Bank who spoke under condition of anonymity.

Jordan's dinar lost around 10 per cent of its value in front of the shekel earlier this month in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank, after international news agencies leaked reports about the King's deteriorating health. But bankers and exchangers blamed the phenomenon on panic buying in the occupied areas, when Jordanians banks had closed last Friday for the Islamic holiday.

Students host silent procession for King Hussein

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Over 6,000 students and employees at the state-run University of Jordan Saturday participated in a silent procession dedicated to "the soul of His Majesty King Hussein."

President of the University of Jordan Walid Ma'ani, accompanied by the university's colleges deans, university teachers, employees and students took part in the solemn ceremony that started from the university clock tower — located near the Linguistics and Languages Centre — and headed towards the Business and Administration College to Al Sbaria College and back.

Participants began the procession by reading the Fatihah — the first surah (verse) of the Koran — for the soul of His Majesty King Hussein.

Ahmad Awaisheh, a university teacher at the Sharia college, eulogised the King's achievements in building a prosperous country in the face of many challenges, and talked about his charisma.

"He was our great teacher and father at the same time," said Awaisheh.

Yusef Ali, the director of the Islamic and Cultural Centre, told the gathering that under King Hussein's rule, Jordan became a well-known country, seeking peace in the world.

Ali asked students to pray for him and to ask God "to give our great King Hussein a place in paradise. He was not just a king, he was a friend and father for all the Kingdom's people. He worked hard all of his life to ensure a safe life for all Jordanians and Arabs."

Student Zaid Shraideh said, "A great number of people gathered today in this solemn ceremony. All of us are very sad to lose the King. He was our teacher. All students and university employees participated and expressed their sad feelings, which show our true love for His Majesty."

"Even students in opposition parties and foreigners at the university participated today in the solemn ceremony, marking the great sadness obvious throughout the university," said student Qutaibah Qudah.

The group carried black flags, pictures of King Hussein and many placards during the procession.

Some read, "We Will Never Forget You, King Hussein" or "All Generations Will Remember You."

All pledged support for and allegiance to His Majesty King Abdullah.



Abu Nimah lectures American students at conference in honour of King Hussein

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut (AP) — King Abdullah, will carry on his father's efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East, Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations told American students at a conference honouring the late monarch.

King Hussein laid the groundwork for his eldest son to make a smooth transition into power. Ambassador Hasan Abu Nimah said Friday. Saying it would be "practically impossible" to shake Jordan's strength in the region, Abu Nimah said Jordan's government will remain stable despite shifting

political forces in the Middle East following the King's death.

"The institutions he built in Jordan, the principles he set, the noble goals he set in his life for serving are still alive," he said. "His son... will carry the banner with the same confidence and strength, and the march toward building peace will continue."

Abu Nimah's comments on the change in power came in a speech to about 75 college students at a mock Middle East peace summit at Yale University.

The organisers of the event saluted King Hussein, who died Sunday

from cancer at age 63, with a moment of silence. In the conference programme, they included a tribute that noted Hussein's efforts to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

College students from across the country attended the conference, which was designed as a learning experience for those interested in international diplomacy. During the simulated summit, students were assigned to represent differing political interests in the Middle East.

They negotiated on human rights issues, regional security and terrorism, economics and

trade, Jerusalem and holy sites, Palestinian statehood and refugees, in an effort to reach a peace accord.

Joseph Miller, 23, a senior from the University of Maryland, is an American Jew, but he represented the Palestinian Authority at the conference.

"It's more of a role-playing exercise than actual practical experience," he said. "As American Jews, we feel strongly in a certain way, but we've never felt personal danger, so we don't have an emotional stake in it the way Israeli Jews do."

American Christians wonder what price U.N. policy on Iraq?

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — After eight years of crippling United Nations-imposed economic sanctions on Iraq, the people and children of a once proud nation continue to struggle against a war which for them has not ceased between bombings.

Omar is a six-year-old Iraqi boy, who was not even born when the Gulf crisis broke out in 1990. His parents had waited 11 years to have a baby boy. He is their only son, and today cancer eats away at his brain as he lays suffering at a hospital without the relief of medicine and pain-killers.

"His eyes had to be removed after the pressure in his head created by the tumour forced his eyes to bulge," says Margaret Francham from the Bruderhof

Community, an American humanitarian organisation.

The 15-year-old girl, along with nine others from her group, have spent the last two weeks in Baghdad cleaning and scrubbing blood- and urine-splattered walls at the Saddam Hussein Paediatric Teaching Hospital.

"We took our own disinfectants, since Iraq is banned from importing them, and scrubbed floors and cleaned stained beds," said Kalah Nichols 17.

She told the Jordan Times that the team "worked in the leukaemia ward, cleaning everything and anything that could be cleaned in those rooms."

"The rooms had not had a thorough cleaning since the war eight years ago," said Iva Jane Shirley another member of the ten-member delegation to Iraq.

The Bruderhof Community is an alliance of 3,000 American Christians living in religious communities in the United States and England.

The group travelled to Iraq to make a humanitarian statement and to help Iraqis in whatever manner they could. They returned to Amman "with heartbreaking images of a people forced to suffer a war which for them has not ended."

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Health an average of 6,000 children below five years of age die in Iraq every month because of the lack of medicine, vaccines, malnutrition and cancer, now the number one child-killer.

Doctors say they have noted a definite increase in the number of leukaemia cases among Iraqi children — cancer they say is caused by chemical warfare and

depleted uranium from the bombings during the second Gulf War in 1991.

The infant mortality rate for under-fives has increased 16-fold during the eight-year-old sanctions, health ministry officials say.

The Saddam Hussein Hospital, once pristine, is a shadow of its former reputation as the leading hospital in Iraq. Each room accommodates as many as eight children, who are delivered from even the most remote areas of Iraq for cancer treatment. As necessary medications are unavailable, these children almost inevitably succumb to the killer disease.

"The bombing and economic sanctions are a crime that cry to heaven," said Deborah Swinger, a Bruderhof member. "We want to extend the hand of peace and love to the people of Iraq," said Deborah Swinger.

Swinger is a Bruderhof member.

The United Nations "oil-for-food programme" stipulates that Iraq is allowed to sell \$5.2 billion worth of crude oil every six months to buy basic food and medicines; a ceiling Iraq has been unable to meet due to the collapse of prices on world markets and the deterioration of its oil production facilities that cannot be maintained owing to the sweeping sanctions.

Approximately eight million tonnes of supplies have arrived in Iraq since the fifth phase of the "oil-for-food" began two months ago.

"Economic sanctions should not be used as a political weapon against a country and its people," said Swinger upon her return from Iraq.

Swinger said that for the children of Iraq each passing

day is vital. According to the team, the hospital's only chance to fight off death from these suffering children is to administer blood transfusions.

"We saw mothers standing in constant vigil over their dying children," Shirley said. "Prior to the sanctions, medicine was free at the Saddam Hussein Hospital. Now, due to its scarcity, parents have to pay for it."

Many Iraqis sell part of their food rations to pay their children's hospital bills. The average monthly wage of a civil servant in Iraq is worth \$5 as a result of the collapse in the local currency under sanctions.

"Some mothers tried to comfort their children by cooking for them in their rooms," said Nichols, who like her colleagues, was wearing a long chequered

dress and plain head scarf.

Those who could not afford to bring in food were offered hospital stew and rice.

"The food rations they get lack vitamins and minerals, it's just not enough for each person," said Mark Clement, a team member.

In December, rations of powdered milk were increased for both adults and infants. Iraq receives wheat, rice, sugar, tea, vegetable oil, soap and detergent.

Despite their sufferings, Iraqis cling to their faith.

"We noticed the incredible faith and tolerance these people had," noted Swinger, explaining that despite the fact that the team was American, the Iraqis treated them with respect.

"Iraqis respect and regard human beings with great esteem. They don't have any prejudices like people in

America," said Swinger.

Swinger visited Iraq nearly four years ago and compares the situation then to what she saw this week.

"The situation is deteriorating, it is completely run down, sad, and dirty," she says.

She noticed how the number of children begging in the streets had increased, people's clothes looked worn, cars bore cracked windshields, dents and belch exhaust fumes.

"With the bombings [last] December, electricity has been cut off for three hours at night and another three during the day," Swinger points out.

Economic sanctions can only be lifted when arms inspectors have verified that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction.

arawneh
rnest



A Sofia resident braves the freezing temperatures as she walks through heavy snow with her dog, after a snowstorm hit the Bulgarian capital and the rest of the western part of the country (AFP photo)

Heavy snow sweeps central Europe

VIENNA (AFP) — Heavy snow overnight blocked roads across central Europe, disrupting traffic and cutting off towns and villages. In Hungary, hundreds of vehicles were stranded after snow blocked the main north-east highway. More than 50 roads were impassable in the region, leaving more than 200 towns and villages cut off, the MTI agency reported. Border crossings at Lonya and Barabas, at the Ukraine

frontier, were closed by the snow, along with a major route into Slovenia, MTI said. Forecasters predicted more snow Saturday. Friday, Hungarian police said six people had died in the cold snap sweeping central Europe since Wednesday. Around 300 troops have been drafted in to help with snow-clearing and rescue efforts. Traffic was also disrupted

on all major roads in the east of neighbouring Austria Saturday. Long queues developed at the Austria-Hungary border and certain cross-border routes, including at Deutschkreuz, were closed to heavy vehicles, officials said. Further south in Bulgaria, the snow also disrupted traffic and cut electricity to around 166 towns and villages, the BTA agency reported. Some 20 villages were also without water, while 17 were without telephones after snow brought down lines. The Black Sea port of Burgas was closed by strong winds Saturday and the snow disrupted flights to and from Sofia airport. Meanwhile in France, long traffic queues were reported between Lyon and the Alps Saturday as thousands of holidaymakers headed for ski resorts.

Clinton willing to commit U.S. forces to peacekeeping role

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton is offering to commit American ground troops to a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo if Serbs and ethnic Albanians overcome steep differences and reach a political settlement. Clinton's decision, which he was disclosing in his weekly radio address Saturday, was hinted at Friday night by Sen. John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and then confirmed by a senior administration official. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, meanwhile, was heading for Paris Saturday to assess peace talks between the two warring sides. The parties have an informal deadline of Feb. 20 for reaching an accord. Officials said it was not a foregone conclusion an agreement would be reached despite the threat of NATO military intervention. Warner, appearing Friday night on CNN's "Larry King Live," said, "There's going to be a significant announcement by the president on Kosovo ... what we're going to do." While giving no specifics, he said he had spoken to Pentagon officials and Senate colleagues, and that the Senate would be supportive. Asked about Warner's comment, National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said Clinton, in his radio address, would "continue his conversation with the American people about the U.S. national interests and the stakes in Kosovo." Leavy refused to elaborate.

There are deep divisions between the Serbs and Kosovo Albanians on almost all important issues, mediators said Friday. "We are going to have to make a lot of progress in the days ahead," said U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, the chief mediator. Warner, appearing Friday night on CNN's "Larry King Live," said, "There's going to be a significant announcement by the president on Kosovo ... what we're going to do." While giving no specifics, he said he had spoken to Pentagon officials and Senate colleagues, and that the Senate would be supportive. Asked about Warner's comment, National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said Clinton, in his radio address, would "continue his conversation with the American people about the U.S. national interests and the stakes in Kosovo." Leavy refused to elaborate. The senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "Depending on the character and composition of a political settlement, the president is prepared to contribute U.S. ground forces to a potential implementation force." Some reports have suggested as many as 4,000 U.S. troops. Pentagon officials said the United States would send 2,200 Marines to Kosovo in the first stage of any peacekeeping mission if there's a need to move quickly and U.S. troops are involved. More than 2,000 people have been killed and hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes in clashes in Kosovo between ethnic Albanian separatists and Serbian security forces. Britain and France are serving as co-hosts for the talks in Rambouillet, France. Albright will meet with Hill, the U.S. ambassador to Macedonia, and "make her own on-the-ground assessment," the State Department said Friday. A decision is due this weekend on whether to extend negotiations into a second week. That would depend on how much progress the two sides were making on a self-rule plan for the Serbian province. The United States does not support independence for Kosovo, but is insisting any settlement provide maximum self-rule for a three-year trial period. U.S. Marines are already deployed near Kosovo as part of an amphibious ready group in the Mediterranean. Army soldiers and heavy equipment, which sometimes take weeks to deploy, would follow Marines to Kosovo as part of a long-term NATO peacekeeping operation, said a Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Army troops could come from Europe, Asia or U.S. bases, depending on what type of units are needed.

Two battle for Nigeria's main party's presidential ticket

JOS, Nigeria (AFP) — Former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo arrived Saturday in the town of Jos for the convention of Nigeria's largest political party, hoping to be picked as candidate in presidential polls. Bantling the 61-year-old retired general for the nomination of the centre-left Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is a 66-year-old former civilian vice president, Alex Ekwueme, with the elections due in two weeks. Ekwueme held the number two post from 1979 to 1983 in the last civilian administration of Africa's most populous nation. Ahead of the PDP congress, rivalry between his camp and those backing Obasanjo has become intense. Up to 40 million Nigerians will vote next weekend for a two-chamber parliament, and then head back to the polls Feb. 27 to elect a new president. Nigeria has been ruled by the military for all but four years since the country's first coup d'etat in 1966 and this month's

elections are aimed at ending that domination. Early Saturday, with posters from the rival camps plastered over the small hill town, 2,500 convention delegates were being busily wooed by each side, seeking last-minute conversions of supporters of the other. Obasanjo, who as a military man took the surrender of the Ibo forces in Nigeria's 1967-70 civil war, was military number two in the regime of the late General Abacha, killed in a 1996 coup. The Yoruba general put down that coup and took charge, promising to hand over to a civilian regime three years later. In doing so, he became the first modern African military leader to transfer power voluntarily to civilians. After leaving office, and the army, Obasanjo served on a series of international commissions and became increasingly vocal in criticism of subsequent military regimes. In 1995, he was jailed on trumped up charges of plotting a coup against late military leader General Abacha, spending just over three years in detention until he was released last year. His rival for the ticket, Ekwueme, is a wealthy businessman, an Ibo who was a surprise choice as running mate in the 1979 elections for northern conservative Shehu Shagari. Ibos and Yorubas constitute two of Nigeria's three principal ethnic groups among many, the third being the northern Hausa-Fulani. A conservative and owner of an architecture practice, Ekwueme earned a reputation for honesty in the Shagari administration which was overthrown in 1983 by a popular military coup. The military administration that then took power set up tribunals to investigate widespread charges of corruption against the Shagari regime but found that, while many had profited, Ekwueme had actually left office a poorer man than he had come in. As vice president, Ekwueme

Mexico to unveil new drug-fighting strategy

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico is unveiling a new hi-tech strategy to try to seal off its borders to drug traffickers when U.S. President Bill Clinton travels to Mexico for a summit this weekend. The \$500 million strategy requires extensive financial help from Washington to keep smugglers from using Mexico as a corridor to smuggle. South American drugs into the United States, Interior Secretary Francisco Labastida Ochoa said Friday. Labastida said much of the plan was finalised during a quick visit he made this week to Washington. In a radio interview Friday, he said drug trafficking "has become a problem of (Mexico's) national security." Mexico needs to buy sophisticated monitoring and tracking equipment to seal its borders with Guatemala and Belize in the south and the United States to the north, he said. "It's not the kind of thing you can buy off the shelf in a drug store," he explained. Some of the radar trackers can simultaneously monitor up to 300 ships, launches or aircraft within a radius of 900 kilometres. "We need to get it quickly and we need to get it on easy terms," he said. The strategy will be formalised in a so-called "memorandum of understanding" to be signed when Clinton meets with President Ernesto

No vindication for Clinton in U.S. newspapers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — If U.S. President Bill Clinton was hoping for vindication after being acquitted by the Senate, he didn't find it Saturday in the editorial pages of the nation's newspapers. Most echoed American opinion — frowning on Clinton's conduct, but glad he was acquitted in a case many thought should never have been brought. "It's Over!" screamed the Detroit Press in a banner headline, one day after the president's opponents fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to oust him on perjury and obstruction of justice charges. The Washington Post — whose investigation of the 1992 Watergate break-in led to the resignation of former President Richard Nixon — praised the Senate's decision as "the correct one." "That is not, however, any kind of vindication worth celebrating for Mr. Clinton, much less for the Constitution," the Post editorialised. "It is a simple judgment — more mature, perhaps, than principled, and made with every understanding of the ignoble qualities of the man who sits in the Oval Office — that not every offence is worth punishing." The New York Times called the result a victory for the U.S. Constitution, "the great anchor rock of the Republic, enduring through partisan storms in the Congress, immune in the end to even so large and unpredictable a betrayal as a president's dereliction of duty." Like most papers, the Times condemned Clinton for his behaviour in the scandal over his liaison with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, now 25. But the paper accused Republican whip Tom DeLay of browbeating his party's leaders into taking the case to the Senate. "More than any other person, he created the atmosphere that sent them across the Capitol to argue a case that was not strong enough to meet the constitutional requirement for removing a President," the Times said. "It has been a long, humiliating and deeply flawed process," wrote the Kansas City Star. "But the Senate finally arrived at the right place Friday when it decided against removing President Clinton from office." The Minneapolis Star-Tribune took aim at prosecutor Kenneth Starr for his "sex-laden, biased and deceptive report," and House Republicans for pushing the case. "Future prosecutors and House members bent on removing a president had better 1) accuse the president of impeachable offences and 2) prove their case," the Star-Tribune wrote. "This prosecutor and this House did neither." In the president's home state of Arkansas, the Democrat-Gazette said the impeachment scandal would forever stain Clinton's legacy, despite his acquittal. "At least Richard Nixon was granted a quick pardon before sentencing himself to a couple of decades of self-rehabilitation," the Democrat-Gazette editorialised. "Now, wherever William Jefferson Clinton goes, even among those who want to cheer and celebrate, his character and conduct will always be the subject of his every speech, appearance, and press conference." The Post-Herald in Birmingham, Alabama — whose Senator Richard Shelby joined nine other Republicans to vote against the first article of impeachment — accused Republicans of mishandling their case. "Bill Clinton will pay in the history books," wrote the Post-Herald. "But America will recover from what he has done to her."

Judge in mass graves case concerned over government interference

JAFFNA, Sri Lanka (AP) — A judge presiding over the case of excavating a mass grave of 300 Tamil civilians allegedly killed by the military has accused the government of interfering in the judicial process, court officials and lawyers said Saturday. Jaffna Additional Magistrate S.A.E. Ehanathan has taken exception to a Foreign Ministry statement that set the March 5 excavation date. Ehanathan told the Judicial Service Commission in Colombo Friday that he has set no date for the excavation. He would review the situation on March 5 after hearing the preparations for the digging, court officials said on condition of anonymity. The judge told the commission, which oversees judicial work, that he considered the ministry's statement an interference. The foreign ministry Wednesday invited human rights groups and journalists to witness the excavation by scientists from two local universities and government

forensics experts under the supervision of a local magistrate. It was not immediately known why the foreign ministry made the statement without consulting the judge. But the announcement coincided with the visit of President Chandrika Kumaratunga to Jamaica to attend the G-15 Summit. Sri Lanka faces embarrassing situations at international meetings over the issue. A site near in the outskirts of Jaffna is believed to contain the bodies of about half the 600 Tamils who disappeared from military custody after government troops captured the peninsula in early 1996. Jaffna, a Tamil-majority area, was a stronghold of guerrillas fighting for a homeland for minority Tamils. A soldier convicted in July last year of the rape and murder of a family of Tamils told judges he had helped bury bodies near Jaffna, about 300 kilometres north of the capital, Colombo. The government first ordered an inquiry in July

into the mass graves allegations. But work was delayed, the government says, because of floods and difficulties finding specialist investigators. The rebels accuse the majority Sinhalese of discriminating against the minority Tamils, a charge the government denies. Over 57,000 people have died in the insurrection since 1983.

SECTION I. INVITATION FOR BIDS
ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE
WATER AUTHORITY
OF JORDAN
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

Date: Feb. 8, 1999
Loan No.: 95 65 373 K/W Amman II
IFB No.: 6/99/K/W

1. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received a loan from Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau in Deutsche Marks for the Water Supply of Greater Amman. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract(s) for which this IFB has been issued.
2. The Water Authority now invites sealed bids from Bidders in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Federal Republic of Germany (eligible Bidders) for supply and installation of computer hardware and peripherals for the WAJ Amman Governorate computerisation.
3. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect the bidding documents at the office of the Secretary General, Purchasing & Procurement Division, Water Authority, P.O. Box 2412, Amman, Jordan, Tel.: 680100, Tlx.: 22439 WAJ JO, Fax: 679143.
4. A complete set of the tender documents may be purchased by any interested eligible Bidder on the submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of JD150.
5. All bids must be submitted in separate envelopes, marked "technical" and "financial," be accompanied by a security in the amount of JD5,000 (in words: five thousand Jordan dinars) and must be delivered to the office not later than 1500 hours, Jordan local time, on Monday, 22/3/99.
6. Monday, 22/3/99, is the last day set for the purchasing of tender documents.

Eng. Nawaf Daoud
Acting Secretary General
Water Authority

THE NEW WORLD CLASS AIRLINE FROM THE GULF

Requires Cabin Crew based in Doha, State of Qatar.

Qatar Airways, the latest international Airline to emerge from the Gulf, invites applications from suitably qualified persons in search of adventure and a fresh challenge. Candidates must be aged between 20-25 years old (with no airline experience) and up to 30 years old (with cabin crew airline experience), be a minimum height of 5'2" (157 cm), able to swim, and have a mature outgoing personality. Previous experience with an airline, hotel or nursing background is advantageous. All interested candidates are required to forward their curriculum vitae along with one full length and one passport sized colour photo to the following address:

Cabin Crew Department
Fax: 9626-5677411
P.O. Box 1803 Amman 11118 Jordan
Amman - Jordan

ONLY SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE CONTACTED

QATAR AIRWAYS القطرية
EXCELLENCE IN THE SKY

• DOHA • LONDON • KATHMANDU • MUNICH • ABU DHABI •

...on behalf and on be
...Basmala
...Allah my e
...the Hashem
...Nubhanasha
...and protect you
...Subh

...regret and
...the beloved
...The imp
...Jordan and h
...will never f
...King H
...the Middle E
...Without his
...Last this pe
...international
...UFTAA
...human per
...President
...depl
...King Hussein
...at the
...Ashkilah in his
...people into the

PLEASE EXTEND my cond
...people of your c
...world, mourn the
...an inspiration to
...sought so

U

...American
...the people
...King Hussein.
...world even
...always felt K
...and integrity.
...world along with

ON BEHALF of the organiz
...Doctors of the World
...to His Majesty
...family and the pe
...His Majesty King H
...rest his soul in pe

PLEASE to Jordan for the first
...and tell in love with it. St
...made our home here. I
...the Jordanian people have
...part of the family.
...hard to describe the fu
...the people of Jordan at the p
...Hussein "The Lion" has lo
...one of its greatest leaders.
...Our hearts go out to His M
...Majesty Queen Noor, the Roy
...Jordan. Our prayers are with

F.
former

WITH GREAT sorrow and
...family extend our deepest sy
...lences to the Royal family
...Majesty King Hussein. He
...standing person: a wise lea
...fierce champion of peace a
...We have been staying in Jor
...ing that time we came to love
...friendly and hospitable peop
...man, who devoted his entire
...country and his people.
...King Hussein will forever
...of dignity, courage, wisdom
...with other Russian people, w
...or, of The Great King of
...undoubtedly go down in his

ITAR

PLEASE ALLOW us to exte
...to the entire Royal Hashem
...people on the demise of His
...were deeply saddened when
...Hussein's passing away. My
...I had the great honour of me
...the occasion. His Majesty wa
...a charisma unlike anyone w
...Serving as a diplomat in A
...met my wife-to-be, we got
...son was born there. How car
...ing of belonging to the coun
...who were so good and dear
...loss has come over us.

Christine

Letters of condolence

ON MY own behalf and on behalf of the government and people of Brunei Darussalam, I wish to extend to His Majesty King Abdullah my best wishes on his accession to the Throne of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I pray to Allah Subhanahu wataala that He may guide Your Majesty and protect you at all times.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah
Brunei

IT IS with great regret and sorrow that we have received the message that the beloved King Hussein of Jordan has returned to eternity. The impact of his leadership for the development of Jordan and his endless strife for peace in the Middle East will never be forgotten by the international community.

The stability during King Hussein's long reign has fostered a climate in which the international tourism to Jordan and the whole Middle East has taken positive steps forward and opened up very interesting sites to the individual traveller. Without his efforts to stabilise the situation in the Middle East this progress would not have been possible. The international community of travel agency associations, which UFTAA represents, is mourning a great leader and a human personality of the highest standard.

On behalf of our President Assane Fall and myself I convey the federation's deeply felt sympathy at this tragic moment. King Hussein has returned to Allah.

We take opportunity at the same time to wish all success to King Abdullah in his difficult task to guide your country and people into the Millennium. May Allah be with him.

Birger Backman
Monaco

PLEASE EXTEND my condolences to your Royal Family and the people of your country. I, along with many around the world, mourn the loss of your King Hussein. He served as an inspiration to peoples all over the globe. May the peace he sought so valiantly come to pass.

Joan Newcomb
University of South Florida
Tampa
U.S.

I AM just an average American who would like to extend my condolences to the people of Jordan over the recent death of King Hussein.

I have followed world events and politics for over 30 years and have always felt King Hussein to be a man of peace, honour and integrity.

The entire world along with the people of Jordan will miss him.

Denis Pasquale
U.S.

ON BEHALF of the organisation, Medecins du Monde, Greece (Doctors of the World), we extend our sincerest condolences to His Majesty King Abdullah, the Royal Hashemite Family and the people of Jordan on the passing of His Majesty King Hussein.

May God rest his soul in peace.

Dr. Ekaterini Manoussaki
Ms. Marietta Hadzipetros
Amman

I CAME to Jordan for the first time a little over two years ago and fell in love with it. Since that time my family and I have made our home here. The warmth and friendliness of the Jordanian people have made us feel as though we are part of the family.

It is hard to describe the feeling of loss we share with the people of Jordan at the passing of His Majesty King Hussein. "The family" has lost a father, and the world has lost one of its greatest leaders.

Our hearts go out to His Majesty King Abdullah II, Her Majesty Queen Noor, the Royal family, and the people of Jordan. Our prayers are with them.

F. A. Shepard II and family,
formerly of Triality, Alabama-U.S.
Aqaba

WITH GREAT sorrow and heartfelt sadness I and my family extend our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to the Royal family on the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein. He was, in our opinion, an outstanding person: a wise leader, a statesman of vision, a tireless champion of peace and a noble man.

We have been staying in Jordan for 8 months, and during that time we came to love your wonderful country, its friendly and hospitable people, and, of course, King Hussein, who devoted his entire life to the well-being of his country and his people.

King Hussein will forever remain in our hearts as a man of dignity, courage, wisdom and honesty. We, together with other Russian people, will always treasure the memory of The Great King of Jordan, whose name will undoubtedly go down in history.

Anatoli Metelkine
ITAR-TASS reporter in Amman
Russia

PLEASE ALLOW us to extend our heartfelt condolences to the entire Royal Hashemite family and the Jordanian people on the demise of His Majesty King Hussein. We were deeply saddened when we heard the news of King Hussein's passing away. My wife, who is Jordanian, and I had the great honour of meeting His Majesty on several occasions. His Majesty was a true statesman, who had a charisma unlike anyone we have met.

Serving as a diplomat in Amman in the late eighties, I met my wife-to-be, we got married in Amman and our son was born there. How can you not have a strong feeling of belonging to the country and the Jordanian family, who were so good and dear to us. A devastating sense of loss has come over us.

Christina Peridakis-Frills and family
Bonn
Germany

ALL OF us at TCI have been shocked and saddened at the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein.

The whole world admired King Hussein. The whole of the Arabic World admired King Hussein. All of you in Jordan admired King Hussein. He was truly loved by all of mankind.

Shaun Metcalfe
Matt Richards
David Swan
Denyse Bradford
Ian Miller
Surrey
U.K.

TO DESCRIBE the greatest of kings I offer the words of a great poet:

"He was a man, take him for all in all; I shall not look upon his like again."

"...Only I have left to say, More is thy due than more than all can pay."

(quoted from Hamlet & Macbeth)

Mirna Janbek
Amman



IT IS with great sadness and despair that we the Jordanian students at Purdue University extend our deepest and most sincere condolences for the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal, a dear father, a courageous leader and a great man.

It is a sad day for all of us as we witness the loss of a man that has brought a new meaning to the words courage, bravery and heroism. A man who has been a great idol for all, a father of Jordan and the entire Arab World. King Hussein was a true soldier of peace who brought great visions and achievements to Jordan and the Middle East. He sheltered his nation and his people and brought security, pride and sense of worth to all of us. Through his leadership and charisma, the people of Jordan prospered and flourished in the eyes of the world.

It is indeed a hard time for all of us to be away from our beloved country witnessing our people's devotion in paying their tributes to His Majesty. With all of our hearts, we share the grief of such a terrible loss and join our Jordanian brothers and sisters in mourning and paying tribute to our great leader.

His Majesty's reminiscences and good memories will always remain in our hearts and the hearts of many others who appreciate the achievements and triumphs that he brought to his loyal people, great country and to the Arab region. King Hussein has left us with a legacy and a spark of hope to carry in his footsteps and achieve the triumphs that he has launched and fathered through out his lifetime. May God bless him and bless his family and the Jordanian people.

We belong to God, and to God we shall return

Elias Samir Kavar
U.S.

I JUST wanted to write and say we have been thinking about you and share in your loss this week. The King was an extremely well-respected world leader and well-thought of here.

Ron Merritt
Microwave Radio Communications
Duluth, GA 30097
U.S.

WE WOULD like to express our deep grief and sorrow over the passing of our great father and brother the late King Hussein Ben Talal.

We wish His Majesty King Abdullah continued good health and happiness and to all Jordanians further progress and prosperity under King Abdullah's leadership.

Ahed Omar Mansour and family
Amman

THE HERO of our times

Glorious, majestic and grand
humble, enchanting, he is the father of the land
We all worship the grounds he walked on and now we pray on the soil he rests under

The gloomy skies shed their tears
Flooding the weeping throngs with a deluge of troubled waters and fears
His paean of eloquence and wisdom rest engraved till the end of time

A celestial gift made mundane
A "Saint" in a glimmering age of gloom and bane
His spirit lives amongst us for eternity

My words are scarce, for poetry is very obscure, personal and erotic
I feel handicapped, lamented by his curtains, and unable to produce a worthy eulogy

His greatness is unfathomable
Blurred by his vibrant proficiency as he holds the enigmatic throne

The pulchritude of the rite we all witnessed is a sorrowful memory
One that coalesces pride and inner peace

It was a baneful tribulation
One that bridged the world's cultures and foes together in unearthly silence

We are mixed beings, mixed with darkness and light
Sense and intellect, flesh and spirit

He is lightness, a spirit of his own and an intellectual of all times

Placid, taciturn and still he now lies
Benevolent, noble, meritorious, virtuous and kind he will remain

God bless his soul.

Merissa Khurma
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

I WISH to extend my condolences to the Royal Family on the death of your King.

As a Canadian, I am saddened and upset with the actions of our prime minister. Please do not judge all Canadians by the callous attitude of our prime minister. The world has lost a great man.

Vern Larsen
Cold Lake, Alberta
Canada

PLEASE ACCEPT my sincere wishes of support and condolences at the time of your great loss. I pray that Almighty God will grant King Hussein a just reward in Heaven and that the Jordanian people will experience peace, happiness and prosperity, along with all the peoples of the world.

Richard Nelson
U.S.

I AM writing to express my deepest condolences on the death of His Majesty King Hussein. It is so rare that such a man of character and strength passes through our lives. He was a leader of courage and strength and he touched the hearts and lives of people around the world. My thoughts and prayers are with you all as you cope with your loss, and particularly King Abdullah, as he has the additional burden of dealing with his grief while carrying on the historic traditions of leadership set by his father. May God bless you all.

Lesa Myrick
U.S.

WE SEND our deepest sympathy for the loss of the great King Hussein. The world lost a great man and we as American citizens but of Arabic heritage feel that the Arabic World was and always will be in need of someone like King Hussein to be it's security and it's guide.

Said and Salwa Marji
U.S.

THE WAVES were rumbling. The sun was trying to send some of its beauty down to earth, but there was a huge blockage of fog preventing its charm from reaching us to fill our hearts with warmth and happiness. The day is getting gloomier. The Queen inside mourning the loss of her beloved King. We could see her pale face glancing through the window watching the crowd as they got rowdier. Faces with no symmetry, no unity, no order, no nothing that would keep them together, but the grief and the loss of a dear father, friend, and life-long companion.

What would happen, what should happen if the sun came out. Never in a million years will the crowd forget or let go of his memory? Why and for what did their expressions look so inexplicable? It is as if time stood still, no plan for the moment, no thoughts for the future. Nothing seemed to matter or to make sense. I stood there stooping between the congregations, thinking what am I here for? The gate looked too far away for me to reach, but determination and stubbornness got me to stand still. The sky opened up, and I was thrown down, stepped on, felt that my heart left me for good. As I crawled down beneath trying to breathe or to stay alive, all of a sudden a hand just pulled me up and shouted: "Stand in line." What? I didn't comprehend a word, felt like my chin was still smooched and in need of putting back in place. Finally the moment I was waiting for came. All of a sudden the cat ate my tongue. What shall I say to Her Majesty? All that struggle for this moment, and I am now speechless. I did remember saying God be with you but what I really meant is may God be with us all.

Jane Judeh
Amman

I AM an Indian writing from Calcutta.

In July last year I travelled from Calcutta to London and I flew Royal Jordanian. I enjoyed my overnight stay in Amman, and I always respected King Hussein.

I would like to take this opportunity to reach as many Jordanians as possible and send them my condolences at this sad time.

Niladri R. Chatterjee
India

I AM eight years old. We love you King Hussein. We will miss you. We will never forget you because we love you. And we will not forget what you did for us. We love you, we love you, we love you. May you rest in peace.

Yacoub Majdoubeh
Amman

Yugoslavian delegation

AS THE Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was omitted in the Reuters' list of the countries attending the funeral ceremonies of late King Hussein printed in Jordan Times, we hope that Yugoslavia's attendance could be recognised in today's or the next issue of the Jordan Times in brief notice.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

1. His Excellency Mr. Momir Bulatovic, the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
2. HE Mr. Zoran Novakovic, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
3. HE Mr. Oliver Potezica, the Charge d'Affairs and Chief of the Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Amman;
4. HE Mr. Dusan Simeonovic, the Ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
5. Mr. Ratko Kontic, Special Advisor of the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
Amman

Developing nations demand reforms in financial world order

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica (AP) — Leaders of developing nations Friday urged restricting the ability of currency speculators and multinational corporations to bring havoc upon their economies.

Yearning for a stronger voice on the world stage, the diverse nations of the "Group of 15" agreed that a more humane financial world order was needed to prevent a few players from getting richer at the expense of hundreds of millions of poor.

"We have been reminded of the spread of the consequences of the process of globalisation in a world that has become increasingly cold and heartless," Jamaica's Prime Minister P.J. Patterson said in closing the summit of 17 nations, which represent some 30 per cent of the world's population.

The fallout from Southeast Asia's financial crisis makes it clear that industrialised nations must address the developing world's concerns, the leaders declared at the close of a summit dominated by bitterness over the dark side of globalisation.

The Group of 15 (G-15) leaders emphasised their commitment to free trade, but they said it must be regulated.

Asia's crisis "did not stem from resistance of the affected economies to a globalising world... but our failure to manage the integration," said Indonesia's economy minister, Ginandjar Kartasasmita.

The diversity of interests of the G-15 — which includes Brazil, Mexico, India and Egypt — was reflected in a communiqué that didn't match the fiery rhetoric of

speeches at the three-day meeting but did address all concerns raised.

It called for: — International rules to monitor large financial players, especially hedge funds and currency speculators blamed in part for the Asian crisis. That fell short of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad's calls for an international regulating body.

— Social safety nets in development policies and programmes to meet the needs of the poorest.

— Speedy implementation of initiatives by the Group of 8 (G-8) industrialised nations and the European Union to forgive the debts of the poorest countries.

— Urgent programmes to fight increasing poverty and unemployment "as a means for ensuring international peace and stability."

Opposing "disguised protectionist measures" by industrialised nations and the use of trade sanctions to achieve environmental objectives.

— Resisting "unilateral measures with extra-territorial effects" — an apparent reference to the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba.

— A comprehensive international convention to combat terrorism.

The leaders also called for more dialogue with the G-8 to change policies at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which they said reacted too late and with too little aid to the Asian crisis.

A.F.M. TRADE Saturday, 13-02-99 ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open	Close	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	214.500	215.000	+0.23%
NTL BK	1.480	1.520	+2.01%
IBK OF JO	1.280	1.300	+4.00%
INDOEL EAST BK	0.570	0.580	+2.06%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1.460	1.510	+3.42%
THE HOUSING BK	2.760	2.900	+5.07%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.670	1.670	0.00%
JO. GULF BK	0.670	0.700	+4.48%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.670	1.690	+1.20%
JO. INVS. & FIN. BK	1.290	1.290	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.610	0.640	+5.88%
BANKS INDEX			
	282.920	point =	+0.95%
INSURANCE			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.790	2.830	+1.43%
INSURANCE INDEX			
	125.750	point =	+0.20%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.700	1.790	+5.29%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.780	0.820	+5.13%
JO. INTL. TRADING CENT	0.260	0.270	+3.85%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0.880	0.880	0.00%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.160	1.200	+3.45%
SERVICES INDEX			
	113.820	point =	+1.21%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.690	3.750	+1.60%
PHOSPHATE	2.350	2.470	+5.11%
ARAB POTASH	3.850	4.040	+4.94%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.730	10.850	+1.12%
THE IND. COM. & AGRIC	1.050	1.090	0.00%
WORSTED MILLS	5.550	5.690	+2.52%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	3.130	3.290	+5.11%
CERAMIC IND	1.230	1.290	+4.88%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.340	1.390	+3.73%
JO. PIPES	1.100	1.120	+1.82%
JO. AL DAWA	5.450	5.720	+4.95%
MIDDEL EAST COMPLEX	0.540	0.570	+5.56%
JO. STEEL	0.950	0.980	+3.16%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.850	1.920	+3.78%
CHLORINE	1.200	1.220	+1.67%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.350	0.410	+5.13%
NTL IND	0.360	0.360	0.00%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.300	0.320	+6.67%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	0.970	1.020	+5.15%
NTL CABLE	0.620	0.650	+4.84%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.380	0.400	+5.26%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHAR	1.330	1.390	+4.51%
TEL-ZAY	1.310	1.320	+0.76%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.670	0.680	+1.49%
IND. RESOURCES	0.480	0.470	-2.08%
NEW CAPLES	0.610	0.620	+1.64%
NTL ALUMINIUM	0.710	0.720	+1.41%
INDUSTRY INDEX			
	96.770	point =	+3.61%

Exchange Rates Saturday, 13-02-99 ACCESS 4646868

Currency	US Dollar	UK Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	German Mark	French Franc	Italian Lira	Spanish Peseta	Portuguese Escudo	Belgian Franc	Dutch Guilder	Australian Dollar	Canadian Dollar	New Zealand Dollar	South African Rand	Israeli Sheqel	Thai Baht	Singapore Dollar	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Philippine Peso	Thai Baht	Singapore Dollar	Malaysian Ringgit	Indonesian Rupiah	Philippine Peso
Jordan Dinar	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.8778	1.8389	0.1944	2.3382	0.2078	0.7080	0.1944	0.1944	0.7080	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944
US Dollar	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.8778	1.8389	0.1944	2.3382	0.2078	0.7080	0.1944	0.1944	0.7080	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944	0.1944
UK Pound	5.29775	1.0000	1.0309	9.9478	9.7418	1.0000	12.3687	1.1010	3.7607	1.0309	1.0309	3.7607	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309	1.0309
Swiss Franc	5.1893	0.9798	1.0000	9.7443	9.5438	0.1035	1.2452	0.1107	0.3770	0.9798	0.9798	3.6850	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798	0.9798
Japanese Yen	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9753	0.1067	1.2715	0.1130	0.3850	0.5325	0.5325	1.9519	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325	0.5325
German Mark	0.5438	0.1027	0.1048	1.0211	1.0000	0.1067	1.2715	0.1130	0.3850	0.5438	0.5438	1.9519	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438	0.5438
French Franc	5.1434	0.9709	0.9912	9.8581	9.4581	1.0000	12.0261	1.0890	3.6415	5.1434	5.1434	19.3650	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434	5.1434
Italian Lira	0.4277	0.0807	0.0824	0.8031	0.7895	0.0832	1.0000	0.0889	0.3028	0.4277	0.4277	1.6310	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277	0.4277
Spanish Peseta	4.9114	0.0802	0.0824	8.0345	7.8055	0.0832	1.0000	0.0889	0.3028	4.9114	4.9114	18.4540	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114	4.9114
Belgian Franc	21.4631	4.0562	4.1395	40.3405	39.5055	4.1769	50.2312	4.4850	15.2100	21.4631	21.4631	81.9000	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631	21.4631
Dutch Guilder	1.4124	0.2852	0.2922	2.8522	2.7873	0.2922	3.6032	0.3850	1.2710	1.4124	1.4124	5.3360	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124	1.4124
Australian Dollar	0.6555	0.1634	0.1668	1.6251	1.5915	0.1683	2.0236	0.1799	0.6127	0.6555	0.6555	2.4240	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555	0.6555
Canadian Dollar	2.4468	0.4619	0.4715	4.5846	4.4995	0.4767	5.8721	0.6305	2.1430	2.4468	2.4468	9.0000	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468	2.4468
New Zealand Dollar	1.9976	0.3771	0.3849	3.7511	3.6734	0.3850	4.7621	0.5052	1.6930	1.9976	1.9976	7.3440	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976	1.9976
South African Rand	8.2083	1.5491	1.5814	15.4037	15.0007	1.5814	19.8121	2.1430	7.1896	8.2083	8.2083	30.0000	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083	8.2083
Israeli Sheqel	1.6144	0.3047	0.3111	3.0515	2.9858	0.3139	3.7748	0.3535	1.1430	1.6144	1.6144	6.0000	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144	1.6144
Thai Baht	2.7569	0.5324	0.5313	5.3480	5.2075	0.5337	6.6053	0.7178	2.3978	2.7569	2.7569	10.0000	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569	2.7569
Singapore Dollar	11.1520	2.1051	2.1480	20.9410	20.5075	2.1482	26.0753	3.2178	7.8956	11.1520	11.1520	40.0000	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520	11.1520
Malaysian Ringgit	24.2236	4.5728	4.6850	45.4667	44.5451	4.7097	58.5381	6.9346	22.8047	24.2236	24.2236	90.0000	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236	24.2236
Indonesian Rupiah	50.4670	9.5264	9.7253	94.7662	92.8045	9.8121	118.0000	10.4890	35.7306	50.4670	50.4670	180.0000	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670	50.4670
Philippine Peso	2.1988	0.4134	0.4220	4.1120	4.0269	0.4226	5.2052	0.5530	1.8519	2.1988	2.1988	8.0000	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988	2.1988

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

NOTE: NEITHER ACCESS NOR THE PUBLISHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR MISTAKES

DEPOSIT INTEREST PRICES

CBSA

CURRENCY	ASK	BID
US DOLLAR	0.7080	0.7020
GERMANY MARK	1.1967	1.1850
SWITZERLAND FRANC	0.4584	0.4505
FRANCE FRANC	0.5690	0.5620
JAPAN YEN	0.1511	0.1524
HOLLAND GUILDER	0.0184	0.0216
ITALY LIRA*	0.3625	0.3431
AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR	0.0473	0.0475
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	0.7380	0.7420

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Attracting, consolidating investments seen needing qualified, active personnel

** ACCORDING TO Fawzi Tuayme, a member of the Lower House of Parliament, the government measures to activate, encourage and attract investment are still below the ambitions. "The economic measures require a strong, active and qualified state administration that would monitor, evaluate and follow-up these measures," he stressed. Tuayme demanded that the concerned parties do the utmost to rehabilitate the administrative cadres of all civil servants in all sectors.

"This is a basic and vital matter to consolidate the reality and opportunities of investment to correspond with the ambitions of those who formulate national legislations," the deputy said. "The rehabilitation would surpass the bureaucratic measures which often represent the main barrier to lure investment."

Tuayme highlighted the Egyptian investment model and saw it as a guide for the officials in the Kingdom from the point of view of administrative and legal mentality and the facilities provided in addition to the infrastructure. The Egyptian model was also seen by the member of Parliament as being outside the mentality of penalising and imposing fines on investors.

The deputy emphasised the importance of foreign investors teaming up with local partners because that would consolidate the trust of the

investors in finding guides who know the ins and outs of many vital and important issues and, as such, can facilitate many procedures and transactions.

Wahib Shaer, board chairman of the Jordan Gulf Insurance Company said there must be a vital administration capable of initiating direct contacts with local and foreign capitalists. "Providing them with all the necessary information for their investment operations would create and consolidate the investment climate and opportunities in an encouraging manner," Shaer added.

The chairman of the insurance company indicated that consolidating investment requires an administrative cadre capable of managing, implementing and explaining various laws in a correct manner. "However," he said, "the international economic crises have proved at this stage that global openness should be gradual so as any mistake or negative effect of the policies or programmes of such an openness will have a limited impact."

Shaer concluded that there is an imbalance in the Kingdom's economic laws and that reflects negatively on the investment performance. He stressed that there should be incentives and commissions to encourage the good investment efforts (Al Arab Al Yawm).

South Korean banks register record losses

SEOUL (AFP) — Crisis-hit South Korean banks registered a record net loss of 14.48 trillion won (\$12.32 billion) last year amid mounting provisions for bad debts, financial watchdogs have said.

The 1998 data represented a whopping 370 per cent increase from the previous year's loss of 3.88 trillion won, the Financial Supervisory Commission (FSC) said.

"It was a record net loss," an FSC official said, adding only three of the country's 22 institutions — Hana, KorAm and Shinhan banks — turned in profits last year.

The rise reflected stricter prudential regulations on provisions for bad loans, an increasing number of corporate failures and more reserves for retirement pay.

The government has earmarked some 64 trillion won for the purchase of bad loans, recapitalisation and deposit insurance.

Officials estimate that bad loans run up by all domestic institutions exceed 100 trillion won.

Hana was the best performing institution last year with its 1998 net profit jumping to 110.8

billion won from 43.5 billion won a year ago.

Hana boasted that lower provisions for bad loans, wider interest-rate margins and increased commissions boosted income.

KorAm Bank registered a record net profit of 53.4 billion won in 1998, compared with a loss of 37.1 billion won a year earlier.

Its low non-performing loan ratio of 2.99 per cent helped underpin earnings, a KorAm spokesman said, adding foreign-currency trading and exchange fees boosted income.

"This year, we expect a net profit of 200 billion won on stable interest income, services charges, and bond trading commissions," he added.

Kookmin also made a net profit of 73.4 billion won last year, but its actual balance sheet will be available after it completes the acquisition of a long-term credit bank.

Net losses at five major banks — Seoulbank, Cho Hung, Hanvit, Korea First, and Korea Exchange banks — accounted for 76 per cent of the total.

Commercial Bank, which has agreed to combine with Hanil Bank, posted a net loss of 1.64

trillion won, compared to Hanil's loss of 1.7 trillion won.

The FSC said the integrated net loss of Commercial and Hanil banks would not be available until the institutions complete their merger process, which will require massive but unspecified debt write-offs by the government.

Korea First, which was sold to a U.S.-led consortium in December, suffered a net loss of 2.6 trillion won last year, up from a loss of 1.6 trillion won in 1997.

The net loss of Seoulbank, which has yet to find a foreign owner, also jumped to 2.24 trillion won last year from the previous year's 916 billion won.

The sale of Korea First and Seoulbank has been a key condition of a \$57 billion bailout extended by the International Monetary Fund in late 1997.

The bailout prompted a sweeping reform drive to clean the mess at banks, which have been strangled by high loans-to-deposit ratios, low returns on equity and a high proportion of shares in their portfolios.

The FSC last year dissolved five non-viable institutions, including Chungcheong and Kyonggi bank. Hana took over Chungcheong while KorAm acquired Kyonggi Bank.

It estimated the combined recurring profit of 22 institutions at 4.8 trillion won last year, up 56.6 per cent year-on-year on increased won interest income, foreign exchange gains, stock gains and lower costs.

Their extraordinary losses, arising from non-performing loans and stock trading losses, rose to 7.5 trillion won from 2.2 trillion won.

The combined interest income fell 8.3 per cent year-on-year to 8.4 trillion won due to higher foreign currency borrowing costs and losses from foreign currency assets.

Total costs were down 17.4 per cent year-on-year to six trillion won, assets up 2.2 per cent to 574.6 trillion won, and deposits up 1.4 per cent to 389 trillion won.

Total lending slipped 4.3 per cent to 270 trillion won, but securities holdings were up 2.8 per cent to 191 trillion won.

AFM keeps upward tempo

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) rose by three points after it reopened Saturday following five days of official mourning.

Brokers said the brisk trading defied fears among investors that the King's sudden death would reflect negatively on the stock market.

Naim Naqeeb, a broker, said that pledges by foreign states, especially Arab Gulf countries and the United States, to extend economic assistance to the Kingdom have "injected confidence" among investors.

"News about foreign assistance have created optimism in the stock market which reflected positively in yesterday's activities," Naqeeb told the Jordan Times.

"The smooth succession, proving that institutionalism is deeply rooted in the country, eased the fears of investors," the broker added.

Amer Muasher, another broker, said trading focused on the "most active shares" blue-chips, which are expected to record good profit this year.

The AFM's price index jumped to 181.1 points compared to 178.1 points in the previous week, when most of the shares also recorded increase in their prices.

Out of the 62 firms that changed hands on the floor, shares of 53 companies recorded increase in their prices, two registered decrease while seven firms recorded no change in their prices, the bulletin showed.

Muasher highlighted that the major blue-chips, mainly the cement, potash, phosphate, pharmaceutical companies and the Electric Power, recorded a limit-up increase in their share prices.

The cement share price rose to JD3.750 up from JD3.680 while the potash share price closed at JD4.040 up from JD3.850.

The Arab Bank, the Kingdom's largest financial institution, rose by 500 fils amid low demand for its shares.

The daily trading amounted to JD2.6 million, the bulk of which was recorded by the industrial sector, mainly the pharmaceutical industry.

Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing recorded JD833,130 during yesterday's activities followed by the Jordan Electric Power which won JD 409,600 while the Housing Bank ranked third with JD301,889, the one-page bulletin showed.

Muasher said brokers and investors expect active trading during the coming days.

Muasher noted that primary results of major firms show good profits in the past year "which will enhance the confidence and trading in the stock market."

The Polish Ladies Club in Jordan joins the Hashemite family and Jordanian people mourning the demise of His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal who has won love and respect. King Hussein

will remain in our memory as a man of great courage, modesty and remarkable vision who dedicated all his life to this land and its people. May his soul rest in peace and may God give us all the strength to honour his legacy of compassion, love and peace

Charles Mackenzie and Staff of First National Developer Services Jordan

Express their sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the Royal Hashemite Family and to all Jordanians around the world for the loss of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal
May his soul rest in peace

MESSIER-BUGATTI Aerospace

MESSIER services

Join the Hashemite family, Royal Jordanian, the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Jordanian people in their deep sorrow at the loss of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal,

a great Pilot and Aviator.

May his soul rest in peace.

The Islamic Academy of Sciences Amman - Jordan

The Council, Fellows, Director General and Staff of the Islamic Academy of Sciences in Amman mourn the passing away of **HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN I** and extend their sympathy and sincere condolences to

His Majesty King Abdullah II,

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hamzah Ben Al Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Ben Talal / Founding Patron of the Islamic Academy of Sciences and members of the Royal Hashemite Family and the government and people of Jordan.

Islamic Academy of Sciences, P.O. Box 830036, Amman-11183

Trico International & Capri TT

Deeply regret with sorrow & grief the demise of the beloved King

Father Of The Nation & a Great Leader

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal

and extend their deepest condolences to

His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein,

The Royal Hashemite Family and the Jordanian people



THE DEAREST OF MEN

YOU WILL REMAIN IN OUR HEARTS THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES.

THE HOLY LANDS ESTABLISHMENT DALLAS / U.S.A.

Slew of crashes alters Busch field



Danny Bagwell's race car breaks apart after he crashed heading toward the start-finish line with just four laps left in the Goody's Dash at Daytona International Speedway on Friday. His car barrel-rolled eight times before coming to a stop in the apron, with every piece of sheet metal sheared off the body by the time it stopped. After the car came to rest on the track, Bagwell pulled himself from the car and waited for rescue personnel to reach him (AP photo)

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Busch Series champion Dale Earnhardt Jr. crashed twice within two hours Friday, and the second one created a four-car wreck that could drastically alter the season-opening race.

Earnhardt was one of six Busch drivers whose cars were damaged enough in practice to force them into backups. Under NASCAR rules, they must drop to the rear of the field at the start of the NAPA Auto Parts 300 on Saturday.

The 24-year-old driver took the blame for the wreck that also involved Ted Musgrave, Dick Trickle and Jeff Burton. He tried to put his car between a slowly moving Michael Waltrip and Musgrave, who was up to speed.

"I probably shouldn't have stuck my nose in there," said Earnhardt, who also wrecked in the IROC race before practice.

"I should have backed off," Musgrave's car was badly damaged, and he was forced to borrow one of Jeff Purvis' backups. Musgrave said more caution is needed during practice.

"You need to slow down and pick your way through rather than trying to barrel through there," he said.

Two-time Busch champion Randy LaJoie agreed, saying Earnhardt still has much to learn about racing on a fast track such as the 2-mile Daytona International Speedway.

"This is practice," LaJoie said.

"They didn't pay to win practice. I hope people realize that. We've got a garage full of torn race cars."

LaJoie said Earnhardt hurt his own chance of winning by wrecking his primary car. He doesn't think Earnhardt can be as effective in a backup.

"I'm sure his backup car is going to be good, too," LaJoie said. "But without no practice on the stuff, he's going to have a tough day tomorrow."

Earnhardt also was one of four drivers who crashed out of the season-opening IROC event won by his father. Also taken out in that crash were Burton, Rusty Wallace and Eddie Cheever.

There were no injuries in the Busch or IROC wrecks, but four

drivers were sent to the hospital with injuries from crashes in the Discount Auto Parts 200, a NASCAR subcompact race earlier in the day.

Two of them were treated and released. Two others underwent surgery for broken legs.

Busch driver Todd Bodine blamed the track for his crash, that also took out Glenn Allen.

"The track's filthy from the Dash race and IROC," Bodine said. "I ran over something ... hit the wall and then Glenn Allen ran into the side of me."

Tim Fedewa, Matt Kenseth, and Chuck Bown also were involved in accidents. Only Fedewa and Kenseth will start Saturday in their primary cars.

Sampras' biggest shot is his softest

SAN JOSE, California (AP) — Though he slammed 12 aces and a bunch of unreturnable groundstrokes, the biggest shot of Pete Sampras' quarterfinal win over Bernd Karbacher in the Sybase Open was his softest.

The top-seeded Sampras, who has not faced a break point in the tournament, began with an ace and ended with another as he reached the semifinals with a 7-5, 6-3 win Friday night.

Sampras will play his semifinal tonight against third-seeded Mark Philippoussis, a 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (7-0) winner over Justin Gimelstob.

The point that began Sampras' only break of the second set would have made most ballet dancers proud.

Karbacher hit a lob over Sampras' head and far to his left.

Sampras, backpeddling quickly and barely managing to maintain his balance, reached high above his head and just tapped the ball back for a winner.

That was his first point of the sixth game of the second set.

He went on to break Karbacher's serve to take a 4-2 lead, then held his own serve twice to finish off the match.

"It was an unusual point," Sampras said. "I was happy to somehow hit an overhead. My feet kind of got stuck. And I used my little athletic ability to hit that shot. My athletic ability really helped me out there."

Sampras, returning from a 10-week layoff, did not appear to be at all bothered by a blister that has developed on his right hand during the tournament.

"I was pleased with the way I played tonight. I'm where I want to be,"

Sampras said. "My tennis has gotten better throughout the week."

Philippoussis, who had 11 aces, broke for a 5-3 lead in the third set, but Gimelstob broke right back and forced a tiebreaker. In the tiebreaker, though, Philippoussis turned up the pressure against a tiring Gimelstob.

If Gimelstob had won, there would have been four Americans in the semifinals — the first time that would have happened in an ATP tour event since 1995.

Cecil Mamiit, two days after being handed a place in his first career quarterfinals when Andre Agassi was defaulted for cursing, played his way into the semifinals on Friday.

Mamiit outlasted Mark Woodforde 7-6 (7-5), 4-6, 6-3 in a match that went 2 hours, 27 minutes to reach a semifinal match against fourth-seeded Michael Chang, one of his role models.

Mamiit, who began the year ranked 132nd in the world, probably will move up to the Top 100 with his win over Woodforde. It was his first quarterfinal match in an ATP tour event, and he got there because Agassi was defaulted while leading Mamiit by a set.

Mamiit, who lost the first set 6-0 to Agassi, was leading four points to none in the tiebreaker when Agassi had his outburst. The victory left Mamiit with an empty feeling.

"I would have liked to play that match and get that motivation, knowing I could compete against him," Mamiit said of the second-round match. "I couldn't take anything away from it."

"All I could do was justify the fact I was in the quarterfinals and take advantage of it. This certainly helps. I can't say right now I could

have beaten Agassi that day, but I'm happy with my result today."

Chang was a 6-1, 7-5 winner over Christian Ruud in Friday's other afternoon quarterfinal.

Mamiit, the 1996 NCAA singles champion from Southern California, has tried to incorporate Chang's running style and mental toughness into his game. He also identifies with Chang because they're of similar height — about 5-foot-8, short by today's tennis standards — and of Asian heritage.

Chang, of Chinese-American background, has been a hero to many Asian-Americans. Mamiit, a native of Los Angeles whose parents are Filipino, has similar hopes.

"I've always tried to do the same things he has. He's taken the Asian route, becoming a role model for Asian kids," Mamiit said. "I guess I'll be a role model for Asians also."

Chang said he's excited to be facing someone of a similar background.

"I haven't had the opportunity to be able to play that many Asians in my career," he said. "For me growing up, there were very few Asians playing. Now there are quite a few and they're doing well. That's pretty exciting to see."

Mamiit became the first qualifier to reach the semifinals of the Sybase Open since Danie Visser did it in 1988. Visser lost to Chang in the semifinals.

GS is the basis of ski technique

VAIL, Colorado (AP) — Giant Slalom is where it all starts and where it stays. A complex combination of power, technique and grace, it remains the most exciting, and the most fundamental, event in ski racing.

The greatest feeling on skis has to be that of the perfect carve. That is what every racer fights for, all the way down a GS course. When your timing is right, and your turns flow, euphoria. If you apply pressure at the wrong time and your rhythm is slightly off, you will never have a longer minute and a half in your life.

During summer training camps, much time is devoted to drills and exercises emphasizing the fundamentals of a basic GS turn.

The Swiss team even requires their athletes to complete numerous levels of ski instructor certification to reinforce the importance of the basics.

"The GS turn is the centre of skiing," Norwegian men's team coach Max Wahlquist said. "You have to be in balance, you have to use the ski, tip to tail, you have to be in control of the movement." It's certainly easier said than done. But



Marco Buechel of Liechtenstein hits a gate during the first run in the men's giant slalom on Friday during the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail, Colorado. Buechel is in first place after the first run with a time of 1:11.31 (AP photo)

the beauty of the GS turn is, once you've got it down, it takes you everywhere you need to go, including the other three disciplines.

Downhill and super-G, although happening at much greater speeds, demand the same basic technique.

"If you don't know how to make a GS turn, you can't ski downhill," Austrian men's coach Wolfgang Frandl said.

Wahlquist and Frandl say that when their racers are having trouble in any other event, they go right back to training GS. "back to the

basics." The fact is, downhill racers only train down-hill two or three times a year outside the race season, mostly because it's too hard to find the training space, but also because GS can prepare them just as well.

It is the basics that make

this event so incredibly difficult to master. Precision is a must, but somewhere in there you have to find room for just the right amount of reckless abandon.

There is no faking your way to a successful run of GS; to be fast, it has to be done right. And when it is done right, it is spectacular.

The last two days of GS racing in the World Alpine Ski Championships didn't disappoint. We saw three women on the podium who validated a season of strong results, displaying such mastery of technique that it seemed almost easy.

Then, in one of the most exciting races I have watched in a long time, the men put on a clinic. With so many men able to vie for the podium, they had to find a little extra. I couldn't help but smile in awe as the men risked everything for those medals.

Even though they were skiing a little over the edge, basic technique shone through in every one of those winning runs.

"GS," said fourth-place finisher Paul Accola. "is the base of all skiing. You have only to look at (gold medalist) Lasse Kjus for this."

High school coach benches team again

RICHMOND, California (AP) — The Richmond High boy's basketball team has been benched again.

On Thursday, one day before the team's biggest game of the season, coach Kenny Carter canceled practice and shipped his team to mandatory study hall.

Carter made headlines last month when, dismayed by a lack of academic focus, he banned the Oilers from all basketball-related activities, including practices and rallies.

The team missed a non-league game and an alumni game; when they returned to the court after a week, Gov. Gray Davis was in the crowd to show support for the coach's move.

"I think he's a hero," Davis said of Carter. "Obviously, not every kid is going to the NBA. How they do in school will determine how they do in life."

The Richmond players weren't in

any danger of failing; they all had the 2.0 grade point average the district requires before a student can play.

But the team signed contracts with the coach back in September to maintain a 2.3 GPA, and they were falling short.

Carter said he took the latest action because team members were not taking part in daily tutoring sessions that went into effect after the lockdown ended.

"For some reason, our young men are starting to slip away," Carter said Thursday in announcing the study hall move. "It's not the overall academics but our study habits and attitudes that concern me. If we can spend the added time studying, our overall grades will have no choice but to go up."

Richmond is 18-4 overall and 5-4 in the Alameda Contra Costa Athletic League.

Hingis 'stupid' for remarks on sexuality, Mauresmo says

PARIS (AP) — French star Amelie Mauresmo said Saturday that World No. 1 Martina Hingis was "out of line" when she made remarks about her homosexuality during the Australian Open.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the tournament — where Mauresmo lost to Hingis in the final —

the 19-year-old vowed to ignore the focus on her sexuality and seek to win a Grand Slam event this year.

"Hingis was stupid for what she said; she was out of line."

But I respect her and I think she respects me," Mauresmo said, speaking to reporters at a central Paris bar. "I don't have a lot to

say about it. It is her problem."

Before the final of the showpiece event, the Swiss player — speaking in German at a press conference — was reported to have said "she's here with her girlfriend, she's half a man," when asked about her opponent.

Hingis denied making the

remark but her comments were widely televised — and sensationalized in some of the Australian press.

Two weeks later, Mauresmo said she is looking to learn from her experiences in Melbourne.

"There was a lot of pressure from journalists toward the end of the tournament and I am not used to that,"

Mauresmo said, hours after arriving from a vacation in New Caledonia. "It was the first time that I played in a tournament for two weeks and it was tiring, physically and mentally."

Mauresmo, the first top player since Martina Navratilova to talk publicly about being gay, won the French Open and

Wimbledon junior titles in 1996, and is shooting up the world rankings, climbing from No. 109 at the start of last year to her current position of No. 18.

Now, her aim is to win a Grand Slam event.

"I have a lot of confidence and feel I can go all the way," she said. "Since I was a girl my dream has been to

win a Grand Slam. All I am missing now is experience."

But Mauresmo played down her rapid rise to stardom.

"This is not going to change my life," she said. "I will continue to do the same things."

CINEMA	TEL: 363-4144	CINEMA	TEL: 363-4144	CINEMA	TEL: 569-238	CINEMA	TEL: 567-7430	CINEMA	TEL: 593-793	CINEMA	TEL: 593-793	Risham Yanes Theatre	TEL: 46-25155
PHILADELPHIA '1'		PHILADELPHIA '2'		PLAZA		CONCORDE		GALLERIA 1		GALLERIA 2			
Bruce Willis .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		Comedian Adel Emmam .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria			
MERCURY RISING		ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR		AL ZA'EEM		TBA' AL WAZIR		THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY		LETHAL WEAPON 4			
Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45		Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30			
						CONCORDE '2'				MULAN			
						Sleepwalkers				Shows: 3:30, 5:00			
						Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only							

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.



File photo

(SAP) — Dennis R...
...the Los Angeles...
...as well as...
...\$400,000 for...
...sources said

(SAP) —
...out on...
...De La...
...wether...
...since...
...Leonard and...
...were in

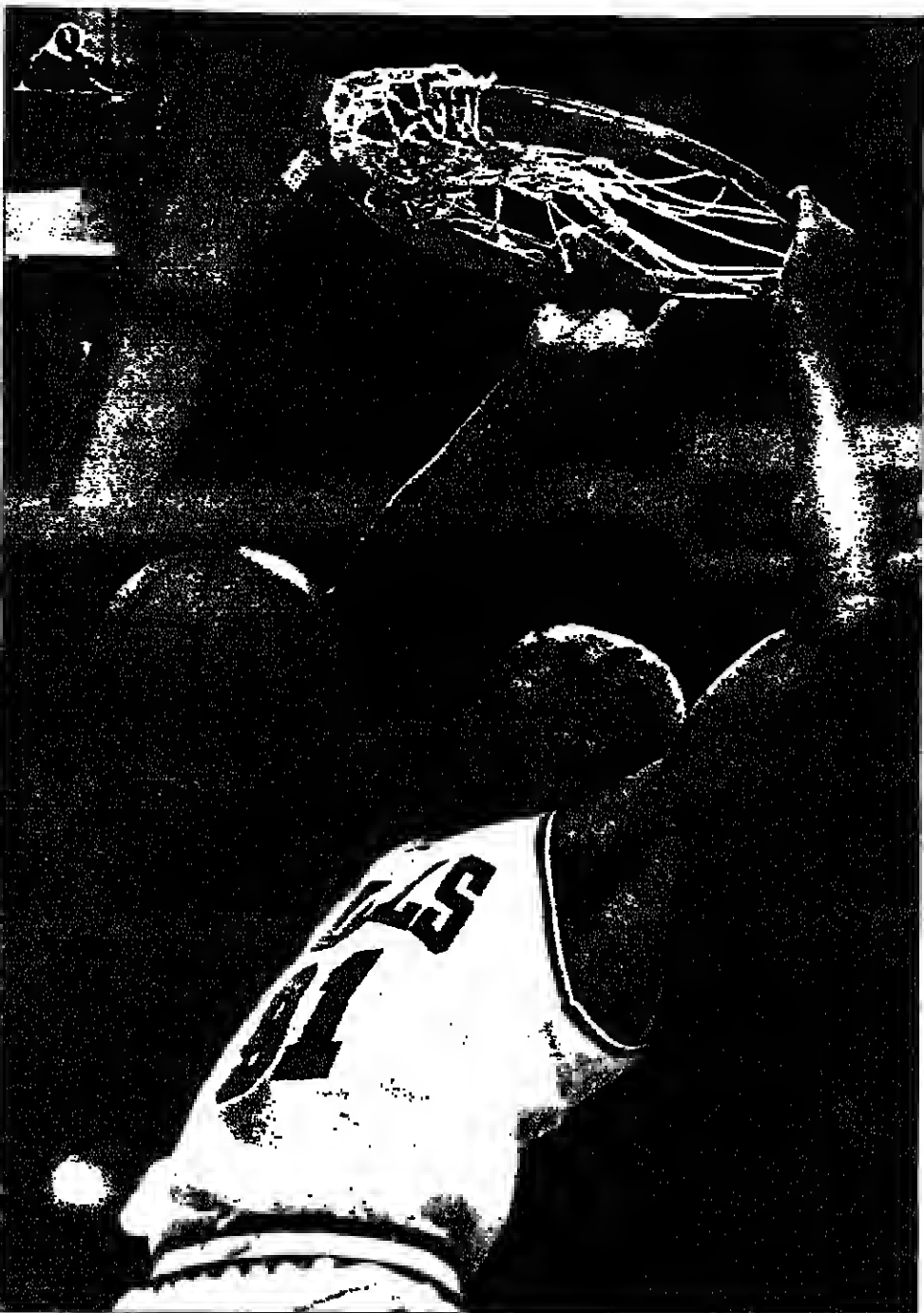
...how...
...the richest...
...will add...
...or so...
...substantial...
...tonight...
...into the...
...his WBC...
...against...
...Quintley

...the first...
...De La Hoya's...
...has seen...
...olympic gold...
...ready earn...
...million in the

...the beginning...
...the for De La...
...partner in the...
...taking...
...risk out of...
...Arum's...
...the chance to...
...extra million...
...the fight sells

...his fights...
...bought than...
...Arum said, "I...
...putting his...
...and out."...
...De La Hoya has...
...winning...
...titles in...
...he...
...been criticised...
...picking...
...were a big...
...up or down...
...to fight him...
...figures in change...
...who is 34...
...made seven...
...of the WBA...
...before it...
...from him for...
...money fights...
...making a

Dennis Rodman agrees to sign with Lakers — report



Dennis Rodman (File photo)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dennis Rodman, the NBA's seven-time rebounding champ and one of the league's most flamboyant players, has decided to play for the Los Angeles Lakers, the Los Angeles Times reported Saturday.

Rodman, known for his dyed hair and cross-dressing as well as his ferocious defense and rebounds, has agreed to play for the Lakers' minimum of \$1 million — pro-rated to \$600,000 for this lockout-shortened season, sources told the Times in

a story published Saturday.

He will also earn \$3 million from an endorsement contract with Converse, the Times said.

Rodman's agent, Steve Chasman of International Creative Management, has been negotiating with the team for the past two weeks. Talks became sidetracked for a week while they discussed a possible movie deal with Fox, which holds an option to buy into the Lakers as a 10 per cent partner.

Spurs overcome 46 by Iverson to beat 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Allen Iverson scored 46 points for Philadelphia but Malik Rose made up for poor performances by David Robinson and Tim Duncan to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 98-94 victory over the 76ers on Friday.

Rose, who attended Drexel, minutes away from the First Union Centre, scored a career-high 22 points on 10-of-12 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds as the Spurs (3-3) snapped a three-game losing streak.

"My teammates were getting me the ball," said Rose, who bought 64 tickets for family and friends. "We played well, we shared the ball and I was the recipient of some good passes and a little luck."

Iverson nearly equalled his total during the 76ers' 3-0 start. He had been a dismal 15-of-55 (27 per cent) from the field and averaged 16.7 points as Philadelphia got off to a 3-0 start, its best since the 1984-85 campaign.

But it was a different Iverson in this contest as he dominated on the offen-

sive end and came within four points of a career high, hitting 14-of-26 from the floor and 15-of-17 from the foul line.

"It would have been better to have a one-point performance and win than having a 40-point game and lose," said Iverson, who added seven rebounds and six assists.

Rose, whose previous career best was 14 points, was the surprising hero as Robinson and Duncan battled foul trouble.

Robinson, who picked up his fifth foul early in the third quarter, was 3-of-8 from the field and just 9-of-18 from the foul line to finish with 15 points and eight rebounds. Duncan fouled out with 1:59 to play with 15 points and six boards.

"We can't keep putting this kind of pressure on the supporting cast," Robinson said. "We've played some good ball, it's just that we've turned the ball over at times and have not shot as well as we would have liked. It took a total team effort to scrap this one out."

Avery Johnson scored 15 points and Sean Elliott chipped in 13 for the Spurs, who shot an atrocious 28-of-51 from the foul line. They were out-rebounded 46-42 but owned a 52-24 advantage in points in the paint.

In Denver, Nick Van Exel had 26 points and six assists and Chauncey Billups made four free throws in the final 16 seconds to preserve the Nuggets' first victory of the year, a 100-94 triumph over the Dallas Mavericks.

Only five games into the schedule, the Nuggets already are ahead of last season's pace. Denver, which lost its first four games this year by an average of 12 points, started the 1997-98 season with 12 straight losses en route to a franchise-worst 11-71 record, the second-worst mark in NBA history.

The victory was the first for Nuggets coach Mike D'Antoni, who served as the team's director of player personnel during the nightmarish 1997-98 campaign.

The Nuggets nearly blew a 16-point fourth-quarter lead but were able to hang on after Dallas rallied within 97-94 with 12 seconds left.

Michael Finley scored 28 points for the Mavericks (1-4).

In Oakland, Karl Malone, who averaged 31 points against the Warriors last season, scored 35 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead the unbeaten Utah Jazz to a 97-81 win over winless Golden State.

Utah's 5-0 start is the best in franchise history. The Jazz also posted their ninth straight win over the Warriors and fifth in a row on Golden State's homecourt.

This was Utah's first game against the Warriors since Malone torched them for 56 points, including the game-winning basket in the closing seconds, on April 7.

Terry Cummings and Tony Delk scored 16 points apiece but the Warriors fell to 0-5, four losses short of last year's dismal start.

Sponsors to IOC: Clean up this scandal fast

NEW YORK (AP) — A revolt is taking shape among the Olympics' biggest corporate sponsors, who fear their investment is losing value because of the burgeoning bribery scandal.

At a closed-door meeting Thursday with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the big-money sponsors assailed the IOC for its handling of the Salt Lake City scandal and demanded thorough reform, participants said.

"We told them, 'Fix it, fix it fast and don't surprise us,'" one participant said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The 3 1/2-hour meeting was described as civil but blunt, offering the clearest sign yet the IOC is facing a revolt by the corporations that pay some \$50 million each to use the five-ring Olympic logo in their ads.

The meeting involved 10 of the 11 companies in the Olympic Program, the IOC's highest-level sponsorship

group: Sports Illustrated, McDonald's, John Hancock, Samsung, Coca-Cola, IBM, Visa, United Parcel Service, Xerox and Eastman Kodak. Panasonic was not represented.

The worst scandal in the modern Olympics' 105-year history involves allegations Salt Lake City gave IOC members money, gifts, scholarships and other favors to land the 2002 Winter Games. The IOC selects the Olympic host cities.

Sponsor representatives, all speaking on condition of anonymity, said the companies are worried the Olympic rings will lose their "halo effect" and become devalued as advertising tools if the scandal persists.

The IOC said it had received the sponsors' support at Thursday's meeting.

The meeting, with IOC vice president Dick Pound and marketing director Michael Payne, involved two dozen vice presidents, marketing

chiefs and public relations directors, who said their concerns reflect worries higher up.

"We told them chairman and bosses were now telling us that they were worried the IOC was not committed to reforms," one participant said.

All the representatives interviewed said the sponsors discussed four things:

- change in IOC management "at the highest level,"
- "thorough reform" through the expulsion of any member directly linked to the scandal; so far, nine members have been expelled or resigned.
- permanent changes in voting for Olympic host cities.
- more public accountability, including open financial records.

Unless the IOC adopts such reforms at a special assembly March 17-18, "it faces revolt March 19," one representative who attended the meeting said.

Payne said he did not see a

significant change in attitude at Thursday's meeting, the second of its kind since mid-January.

"Everyone was very concerned, but they have been concerned," he said. "They asked some questions of us — 'How serious is the IOC on the reform process?' We told them, 'Very serious.'"

Payne said some of the sponsors might be feeling pressure as they near the deadline for locking in ad budgets leading to the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

For the first time this week, a major sponsor publicly criticized the IOC. John Hancock insurance broke off negotiations with NBC on \$20 million in Olympic ads. The company said the move is designed to pressure the IOC to make significant changes.

David D'Alessandro, John Hancock's president, said he was trying to save the Olympics' good name rather

than attempting to force price reductions.

In other developments Friday:

- The highest-ranking Olympic official implicated in the bribery case urged the IOC to dismiss the "scandalous allegations" against him and his son.
- Kim Un-yong of South Korea said "rumor-mongering" has been a "personal affront" to his "untarnished reputation." In a three-page letter to IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, Kim said he will fight his case vigorously. He has been considered a leading candidate to succeed Samaranch, whose term expires in 2001.
- IOC member Jacques Rogge of Belgium, who heads the oversight panel for the 2000 Olympics, said preparations for those games are being disturbed because the Utah scandal has raised questions about whether Sydney won the bid fairly.

Jury out on De La Hoya but he gets richer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The jury is still out on whether Oscar De La Hoya is the best welterweight fighter since Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns were in their prime.

There's no doubt, however, that he's the richest.

De La Hoya will add another \$9 million or so to his already substantial bank account tonight when he steps into the ring to defend his WBC welterweight title against unbeaten Ike Quartey.

It's billed as the first true test of De La Hoya's career — one that has seen the 1992 Olympic gold medalist already earn some \$105 million in the ring.

It's also the beginning of a dual role for De La Hoya as a partner in the fight promotion — taking some of the risk out of promoter Bob Arum's pocket with the chance to make a few extra million dollars if the fight sells well.

"Oscar thinks his fights sell more tickets than they do," Arum said. "I hope my partner's right, but he'll be putting his money up to find out."

While De La Hoya has gotten rich in winning four weight division titles in his 29 pro fights, he has also been criticised for carefully picking opponents who were a bit over the hill or were having to move up or down in weight to fight him.

That figures to change with Quartey, who is 34-0-1 and made seven defences of the WBA 147-pound title before it was taken from him for chasing big money fights instead of making a

mandatory defense.

"I want a tough fight, a good competitive fight," De La Hoya said. "I need to fight the tough guys to bring out the best in me." He's found one in Quartey (34-0-1), although the native of Ghana hasn't fought in 16 months and is coming off a draw in which he was knocked down in the 11th round of his last title fight with Jose Lopez.

Quartey has 29 knockouts and is a solid puncher with both hands, although his straight-ahead style may be made for the boxer in De La Hoya. He weighed 146 1/2 pounds Friday to 147 for the championship.

"I have to figure out what I want to do," De La Hoya said.

"Do I want to impress my fans and the whole boxing world to see who is the last guy standing or do I box him and take him to school? I have to figure that out maybe in the first or second round of the fight," De La Hoya has fought — and beaten — the likes of Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker and Hector "Macho" Camacho, but even he views the 29-year-old Quartey as his first opponent with a legitimate chance of upsetting De La Hoya's carefully laid career plans.

Odds makers aren't so certain, making De La Hoya a 3 1/2-1 favorite in the fight, which will be televised by pay-per-view beginning about 11:30 p.m. EST from the Thomas and Mack Center.

"I think this is the first real test in my boxing career," De La Hoya said.

"He is a former world champion. He is unbeaten. I took this fight because I know that style wise Ike Quartey — heavy biter, dangerous puncher — will bring out the best in me. I'm up for this fight." For Quartey, it's not only the chance to finally earn some big money — he'll get about \$3 million — but the chance to vault his name into boxing's top tier of fighters.

Quartey was supposed to fight Pernell Whitaker last April in a bout that fell through when Whitaker tested positive for cocaine. Then promotional problems derailed a possible fight with IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad.

"It's the biggest opportunity of my life," Quartey said.

Should De La Hoya win, he won't have to look far for his next opponent. Former three-time champion Frankie Randall and Oba Carr are fighting a 10-round elimination fight on the undercard for the right to challenge De La Hoya on May 22 in Las Vegas.

De La Hoya is rooting for Randall, a 37-year-old former WBA super lightweight champion. Carr is 27.

"Oba Carr wouldn't motivate me as much as Randall would," De La Hoya said. "Frankie is still hungry. He has a name. He'd help me fill up an arena." Spoken just like a promoter.

Pele's son to be tried for murder

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP) — The son of Brazilian soccer legend Pele is to be tried for murder, his lawyer says.

Pele's son, Edison Cholbi do Nascimento, 27, and Marcilio Jose Marinho de Melo, 24, are accused of killing a motorcyclist by smashing into him when racing their cars. Vicente Cascione said Friday.

Pedro Simoes Neto, a 50-year-old retiree, was thrown from his motorcycle and killed in October 1992 in Santos, a port town 48 miles (77 kilometres) southeast of Sao Paulo, said Cascione.

"I will prove that Pele's son had nothing to do with this car race," Cascione said. "He passed by after the crash had happened and actually stopped his car and tried to help the victim. I think witnesses got the wrong impression."

Cascione alleged that Melo had run into the motorcyclist but "was not to blame" for his death.

"It was an accident caused by the imprudence of the motorcyclist," alleged Cascione. "He went over a crossroads without stopping when Melo's car was crossing." Nascimento and Melo will be tried by a jury at a court in Santos probably in May, said Cascione, who will only represent Nascimento.

"Most of the time this kind of accident would be seen as involuntary manslaughter," said Cascione. "But it's a trend in Brazil that death by imprudent driving is considered as murder."

Nascimento is a reserve team goalie for Santos, the Brazilian first division side his father used to play for.

Pele's given name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento.

Brazilian star is fit and ready for comeback

MILAN, Italy (AP) — Brazilian superstar Ronaldo, long troubled by knee tendinitis, may be back to action next week after French doctors declared him fit to play, Internazionale of Milan officials said Saturday.

The 22-year-old Brazilian striker would be fielded for a portion of Wednesday's Italian Cup first-leg semifinal against Parma.

Inter's coach Mircea Lucescu said he hoped to have the star-forward in his best form for the March 3 Champions League quarter-final match against Manchester United.

Ronaldo, who has been suffering from inflamed tendons in both knees since the 1998 World Cup in France, has been repeatedly sidelined this season and has played his last Serie A match with Inter on Jan. 17.

However, Italy's largest sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport reported Saturday that

Ronaldo was cautious about his comeback as he still feels some pain in his left knee.

Ronaldo said in a recent interview that he made a mistake by trying to return to action too soon last year, aggravating his knee problems.

The club said that Ronaldo underwent successful knee examinations by a team of French professors in Paris three days ago.

The Milan club, badly missing Ronaldo's goals although fielding such stars as Roberto Baggio, Ivan Zamorano and Diego Simeone, is currently fifth in the Serie A standings, eight points behind leader Fiorentina.

Ronaldo was a key to Inter's triumph in the UEFA Cup and to second place in the Italian league last season.

This season Ronaldo has played only 8 full matches of Inter's 34 league and Cup games, scoring 7 goals — three on penalties.



Ronaldo (File photo)

Four-time all-star Price retires after 12-year career

ATLANTA (AP) — Mark Price could have played another season, but he was frustrated by the injuries, weary of all the moving around and anxious to get on with the rest of his life.

So, one of the greatest shooters in NBA history announced his retirement Friday, ending a 12-year career that included four All-Star games, a spot on Dream Team II and some memorable battles with Michael Jordan.

"It is time," Price said during a news conference at Alexander Memorial Coliseum, where he starred for Georgia Tech in the 1980s. "My wife and I are expecting our fourth child in two weeks, there has been a lot of wear and tear and we have made four moves in the last four years." Price, who will turn 35 on Monday, had offers from several teams to return for another season. But he was leaning toward retirement after being waived in June by the

Orlando Magic, and the lockout clinched his decision.

"You have to know when to say when, and now is the perfect time," Price said. "It makes me feel good to step down when it's my choice and not because nobody wants me."

Only 6-foot (1.83 meters) and 180 pounds (81.65 kilos), Price was hardly an imposing presence on the court. But his uncanny shooting touch earned him a spot in the NBA, and he became a star by honing his passing skills.

He has the highest career free-throw percentage in NBA history (.904) and shot better than 40 percent from 3-point range. He finished with career averages of 15.2 points and 6.7 assists per game.

Price spent his first nine seasons with the Cleveland Cavaliers, making the All-Star game in 1989 and 1992-94. He was a member of Dream Team II, which won the world championship in 1994.

Iraq says three killed in U.S. attack

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq said U.S. planes attacked sites in the southern "no fly" zone Saturday, killing at least three civilians and injuring several others.

A government statement quoted a military spokesman as the American planes conducted 34 sorties over the provinces of Basra, Maysan, Dhiqar and Najaf in an operation lasting 1 1/2 hours.

One formation "attacked a civilian installation ... and this aggression caused the martyrdom of three civilians and wounding of a number of others."

Iraq said the jets attacked a residential area in the southern

city of Al Faw, Basra province, injuring several people including women, and a fishermen's quay.

The report could not be independently verified.

In the United States, the U.S. Central Command in Florida said American planes attacked Iraqi air defence sites near Tallil, about 270 kilometres southeast of Baghdad, and on the Al Faw peninsula.

The U.S. aircraft returned to their bases safely and damage assessment is ongoing, the Central Command statement said.

"Despite repeated warnings, Iraqi actions and intentions pose serious threats to our

coalition forces and friends in the region. Our actions today are an appropriate response to these threats," the statement said.

Saturday was the third straight day that Iraq has claimed civilian casualties in the "no-fly" zones, which were set up by the United States, Britain and France after the 1991 Gulf War to prevent the Iraqi air force from attacking rebels in the north and the south.

Iraq said one civilian was killed on Friday and two were killed on Thursday in northern Iraq.

The Iraqi statement said that on Saturday the attacking

planes were F-14s, F-15s and F-18s. The Central Command confirmed the participation of such aircraft.

The planes came from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi statement said.

Iraqi air defences fired at the planes over Dhiqar, the statement added.

Iraq does not recognise the "no-fly" zones and has vowed to fire at any plane that violates its air space.

The U.S. Central Command accused Iraq of more than 90 violations of the "no-fly" zones since mid-December. It said U.S. and British forces had retaliated by attacking more than 40 Iraqi targets.

New Iraq disarmament panel completed

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The chairman of a key U.N. panel that is to review Iraqi disarmament unveiled Friday a 20-member board whose members combine political with technical expertise.

Brazilian Ambassador Celso Amorim, who is to chair the panel, said it will review U.N. relations with Iraq in the light of the U.S. and British air strikes in December, unveiled the panel's composition to reporters Friday.

Initial favourable reactions from Security Council members to the disarmament panel indicated that he appeared to have pulled off a tricky balancing act and avoided criticism from both sides in the divided council.

"This is a balanced panel," Amorim said after submitting the final list to U.N. Security Council President Robert Fowler.

The team included "people

who can bring to this work adequate amount of expertise, also an adequate amount of broad view of the problems in different areas."

But he acknowledged that he had no guarantee that Iraq would cooperate with the panelists, who include experts of the U.N. Special Commission and its American deputy, Charles Duelfer.

Baghdad has vowed that the UNSCOM inspectors, accused of being spies for the United States and Israel, will never return to Iraq, and is demanding the lifting of sanctions which are linked to the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

As expected, UNSCOM chief Richard Butler will not be a panelist. Amorim confirmed that Butler had told him that "he didn't expect to be in the panel."

Russia has cut off official relations with the Australian

UNSCOM chairman and is demanding his dismissal after his negative report on Iraqi cooperation with the inspectors triggered the U.S. and British air strikes.

The disarmament panel notably includes representatives of the five U.N. Security Council permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — in a thinly-disguised political role.

UNSCOM is well-represented, with 12 out of the 20 panel members either UNSCOM staff experts (four) or national commissioners (eight) from the UNSCOM advisory board.

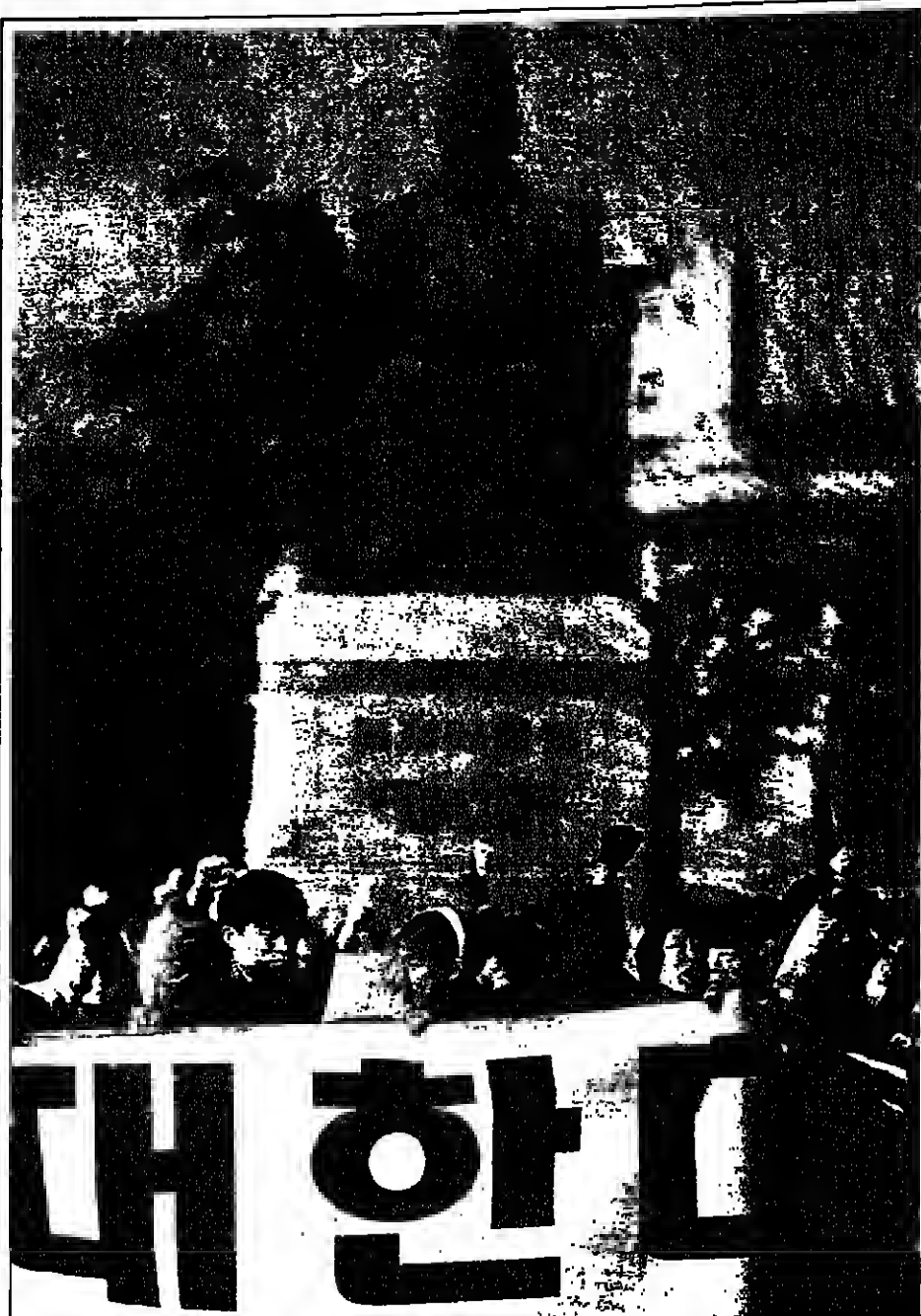
While there are two American members, two British, two French and two Russians on the panel, Amorim took care to have a geographical balance which in addition to a Chinese expert took in panelists from as far afield as Zambia, Argentina and Japan.

And U.N. chief Kofi Annan will be represented by his undersecretary general for disarmament.

Jayantha Dhanapala, who is also one of the 22 UNSCOM commissioners. Three of the five council permanent members — Britain, Russia and the United States — will have their UNSCOM commissioners on the panel.

France is not sending its UNSCOM commissioner but a foreign ministry arms control expert, Daniel Parisot, and China is also sending government expert Liu Jieyi instead of its commissioner.

The disarmament panel is the most controversial of the three, which are also to cover the humanitarian situation and issues relating to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, because of strong political differences among the five permanent members on Iraq.



PROTEST AGAINST LANGUAGE DECISION: Nearly 50 South Korean linguists and activists stage a rally Saturday in front of a statue of King Sejong in Seoul opposing the government's decision to allow Chinese characters on street signs and in government documents. King Sejong of Korea's last Yi dynasty invented the Korean alphabet and promulgated it in 1443. Protesters said the use of Chinese characters will tarnish the Korean language. The banner reads, "We oppose the use of Chinese characters!" (AP photo)

Algerian dies after fight with German right-wingers

COTTBUS (AP) — An Algerian asylum seeker died early Saturday after a fight between a group of right-wing extremists and asylum seekers in a small town in eastern Germany's Brandenburg state, police said.

Police arrested five youths aged 17 and 18 on suspicion of involvement in the death of the 28-year-old asylum seeker, who was not named. The youths already were known to police for extreme rightist activities and violence, police said.

The Algerian lived in an asylum seekers home in Semten, near the town of Guben, where he earlier was found seriously wounded in the entrance to a house, dying shortly afterwards in hospital from injuries.

Police said a fight between right-wing extremists and asylum seekers had preceded his death, with one right-winger suffering stab wounds. His condition wasn't immediately known.

Police were investigating. Separately, Berlin city officials said Saturday police had stopped about 100 extreme rightists from travelling to the Hungarian capital, Budapest, to take part in a march commemorating the Nazi SS.

The right-wingers, some carrying flick knives and neo-Nazi propaganda, gathered Friday evening in Berlin, intending to board two buses to take them to Budapest.

Brazil explosion destroys city block

A large explosion in a city block in Brazil destroyed several buildings and caused significant damage to the surrounding area. The explosion occurred in a densely populated urban area, leading to the displacement of many residents. The cause of the explosion is still under investigation.

Two Pakistani policemen killed in clash with activists

Two Pakistani policemen were killed in a clash with activists in a city. The incident occurred during a protest or demonstration, where the activists were demanding certain rights or freedoms. The police were attempting to control the crowd, leading to the tragic outcome.

Briton kidnapped in Nigeria

A British citizen was kidnapped in Nigeria. The kidnapping occurred in a rural area, where the victim was taken by a group of armed individuals. The British government has issued a warning to its citizens in the region and is working to secure the release of the captive.

Colombian rebels free four hostages

Colombian rebels have freed four hostages. The hostages were held in a remote location and were released after negotiations with the rebels. The incident highlights the ongoing conflict in Colombia and the impact on the civilian population.

Deer kills hunter

A deer killed a hunter in a forest. The incident occurred during a hunt, where the hunter was pursuing a deer. The deer charged at the hunter, resulting in a fatal injury. The hunter was not wearing proper safety gear.

NEWS IN BRIEF

German bank official murdered in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A German official with the Deutsche Bank in Tehran was shot dead Saturday by a gunman who was later killed by police, the official news agency IRNA reported. Citing an "informed" police source, the agency said the gunman, who was being pursued by police, stopped a car belonging to the German embassy along a motorway south of Tehran. It said he took the German driver hostage and tried to flee. The gunman then killed the man, whom the agency named as Heinrich Lembit Heimes, the Deutsche Bank's Tehran representative. IRNA had reported earlier that a man, "apparently a German national," had been murdered along the Kashan-Qom highway south of Tehran. Police caught up with the gunman and he was killed in a shoot-out along with one policeman, the agency said.

At least 67 dead in Afghan quake

ANDER (AFP) — The death toll from an earthquake which struck eastern Afghanistan two days ago continued to climb Saturday as rescue efforts get underway in isolated districts outside of Kabul. The official Balkh news agency said it had confirmed 57 dead and another 10 children froze to death as they were too scared to go back to their homes following the quake. Authorities said 27 children were missing while at least 210 people were injured and the number left homeless exceeded 1,000, according to combined reports. In Ander, near the earthquake's epicentre about 70 kilometres west of Kabul, Wardak provincial governor, Malaway Shamsuddin, told AFP that 300 people from two villages were homeless. "Nine villages were severely affected in the region but we still don't have accurate figures," he said.

Eritrea denies claim of 7,000 casualties

ASMARA (AP) — Eritrea on Saturday denied Ethiopian claims that 7,000 Eritrean soldiers have been killed or wounded in the Horn of Africa war, calling the casualty figures "a pack of lies." The Eritrean News Agency quoted government spokesman Yemane Gebremeskel as saying the figures were greatly inflated and that Ethiopia had not captured key Eritrean military posts as it had asserted. "This is simply a pack of lies," Yemane said. "This deceptive strategy is very dangerous and very naive. They should not assume their people do not know the truth." The casualty figures announced late Friday by Ethiopia, which also claimed to have destroyed six Eritrean tanks and several ammunition depots, could not be independently confirmed.

Countries to enter NATO next month

BUDAPEST (AFP) — The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are to join NATO on March 12, Hungary's MTI news agency quoted the U.S. embassy here as saying on Saturday. The ceremony is to be held at the Harry Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, the report indicated. NATO was founded during Truman's presidency. MTI quoted the U.S. ambassador in Budapest, Peter Tufo, as paying tribute to the Hungarian people who struggled to put their Communist heritage behind them and to play a leading role in central Europe. The report confirmed a statement Thursday by the Polish foreign ministry spokesman that Poland would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on March 12.

Revolutionary Guards say fatwa stands

TEHRAN (AFP) — The death sentence issued against British writer Salman Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is irrevocable, Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards force said in a statement Saturday. The statement, carried by the IRNA news agency, said Khomeini's verdict was "based on Islam" and could not be retracted. "The apostate Salman Rushdie will eventually be burnt in the fire of Muslims' wrath," the elite force said. The statement blasted "certain Western countries and false advocates of freedom of thought and human rights" for a two-year "disinformation campaign to make world people and Muslims believe that Iran has backed down from its stances towards the apostate author Salman Rushdie."

Iranian opposition denounces candidate ban for municipal polls

TEHRAN (AFP) — The growing row over Iran's first-ever municipal elections escalated Saturday as opposition leaders condemned the banning of their candidates by hardliners on a selection committee.

"It's a kind of inquisition and we condemn it," President [Mohammad] Khatami should intervene," said Ibrahim Yazdi, head of the banned but tolerated Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI), a leading opposition group.

Khatami should "respect his electoral commitments and support a true people's participation in power," he said.

Yazdi denounced the "pre-selection" of candidates and their "arbitrary elimination for ideological reasons."

"The municipal elections are a vital important test for the nation as well as a test of the sincerity of the

regime's leaders," he told reporters.

But he added that the Independent and Nationalist Front (INF), an umbrella opposition grouping that includes the FMI, would not call for a boycott of the Feb. 26 polls and urged eligible voters to take part.

"We will participate actively even if they reject our candidates," he told reporters at a press conference ahead of Monday's publication of a final list of approved candidates.

The landmark vote is considered the Islamic regime's first great test in local democracy, but it has provoked tension between conservatives and reformers as both sides seek to consolidate their local power base ahead of next year's parliamentary elections.

The disqualification of moderate and left-wing candidates has sparked a war of

words between Khatami supporters and his conservative opponents.

Khatami established an arbitration committee to quell the dispute, but local press reports say the end result has been only that his reformist supporters have been approved as candidates while other opposition candidates have been banned.

Newspapers have said banned candidates must offer a written pledge of allegiance to the constitutional principle that the nation is ultimately guided by its supreme spiritual leader, currently hardliner Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Moderate Interior Minister Abdulvahed Musavi-Lari, whose ministry is responsible for running the elections through executive committees around the country, has also attacked the move to bar the candidates as "arbitrary."

Vice President Hassan

Habibi said in last Sunday's Tehran Times that "members of illegal organisations and parties cannot run for election," a comment that has not yet been given official backing.

Iran's late revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, slammed the FMI as too liberal and pro-Western, and Habibi — himself a moderate — said it should be judged on the basis of the ayatollah's remarks.

Moderates are concerned that vetting candidates will dampen public enthusiasm and lead to a low turnout, particularly among the country's 30 million or so youngsters who played a decisive role in bringing Khatami to office in 1997.

About 330,000 candidates, including 5,000 women, have been approved so far to stand in elections for 200,000 council seats.

Vigilantes linked to killers of Iranian dissidents — official

TEHRAN (AP) — Hardline vigilantes who assaulted the brother of Iran's supreme leader are linked to the group behind the recent killings of dissidents, a presidential aide said in remarks published Saturday.

About 100 hoodlums attacked Hadi Khamenei, younger brother of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a press adviser to President Mohammad Khatami, as he prepared to address a gathering in the holy city of Qom on Thursday evening.

Khamenei was taken to hospital with "serious injuries," several Tehran newspapers reported Saturday. Earlier reports that he had suffered a fractured skull have not been confirmed.

Newspapers said the attackers also broke the windows of the Mohammadreza Mosque and tore down posters of Khatami.

The office of the Qom governor condemned the attack. Khamenei, 51, owns the liberal-leftist newspaper, World of Islam and his political views are moderate, in contrast to those of his elder brother, who is a leading hardliner in the Iranian hierarchy.

Presidential aide Ali-Akbar Mohtashemi said the attack on Hadi Khamenei and the dissident murders were linked.

"Our free-minded people should not sit idle and allow such actions by the intelligence ministry to continue," Mohtashemi told the World of Islam newspaper.

"No doubt, those who attacked Hojatoleslam Hadi Khamenei... were the same group and are linked to them," Mohtashemi said.

Vigilantes were trying to replace the climate of "freedom and independence" with violence and dictatorship, he said.

Iraq mourns victims of its worst Gulf War tragedy

BAGHDAD (AP) — In the dark cavernous hall of the former bomb shelter, a beam of light steals through a ragged hole in the roof. Some more light is spread by candles burning before rows of framed photographs of children on the wall.

The hole was blasted by a U.S. missile; the pictures are of those killed in the attack on the crowded shelter eight years ago in the worst civilian tragedy of the 1991 Gulf War.

On Saturday, hundreds of people visited the Al-Amiriya shelter on the anniversary of the attack to pay homage to the 403 people that Iraq says were killed in the missile strike. The victims included 52 children and 261 women.

Unmindful of the crowd around her, a woman in black Islamic garb sobbed loudly as she wiped a picture of her daughter, Shayama Ali Hussein, a teenager with a shock of black hair strewn on her forehead, posing for the camera in her finery.

Reserved in his grief, Shayama's father, Ali Hussein Saleh, wept with no sound, gazing at pictures of his three other children who also were killed in the attack.

Also Saturday, the country started a week of mourning for its dead in the Gulf War. Artillery fired 21-gun salutes and senior officials laid wreaths on the Martyrs' Monument in Baghdad.

The government has preserved

the Al-Amiriya bomb shelter as a war memorial to keep alive not only the memory of the victims but also the hatred for the U.S. government. Crayon drawings by children in the shelter showing bombs from U.S. warplanes killing civilians.

U.S. aircraft had attacked the shelter in western Baghdad believing it was a command center. Reporters who visited the site after the bombing saw charred bodies of women, children and men being pulled out.

The Amiriya bombing resulted in the highest civilian casualty in one attack during the Gulf War, which was triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The war ended Feb. 28, 1991.

Saleh said he had sent his four children to Amiriya, a short walk from his house, for the first time on the night of Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. Just before dawn the next day, he said he was woken up by an explosion.

It was the missile that tore a hole as wide as a satellite dish antenna in the one and a half-metre thick ceiling. Ten minutes later, a second missile went through the hole and exploded inside.

Saleh said he rushed to the shelter but could not go inside.

"They brought my son to me. The others I could not even find the remains," he said.

Iraqi officials say temperature inside rose to thousands of degrees, melting bodies along with



An Iraqi woman Saturday mourns the loss of a relative during a ceremony marking the eighth anniversary of the bombing of the Amiriya shelter in Baghdad. Hundreds of people visited the bomb shelter to pay respect to the 403 people that Iraq says were killed in the U.S. missile attack during the Gulf War (AP photo)

cement and iron. The evidence is still there in the blackened ceiling. Iron rods in the roof hang inside along the edges of the hole like petals of a giant flower. Ripped air

conditioning ducts lie on the floor. Isra Dhiya Fadhel, who had slept regularly in the shelter, didn't go there on the fateful night because her 2-year-old daughter, Zara, was

"crying without reason. She just refused to let me go out." Zara's crying also saved her brother, who was still in Mrs. Fadhel's womb and was born three months later.